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Doubts on Avicenna

A Study and Edition of Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī's Commentary on the Ishārāt

By

Ayman Shihadeh

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Contents

Preface

My interest in Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī began more than a decade ago when I was able to establish a link between a figure who featured prominently in an autobiographical work of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and a text transmitted in three manuscripts housed at the Süleymaniye Library. Al-Masʿūdī's philosophical output had previously remained almost completely unknown and unstudied, as it fell strictly outside the narrow bounds of what, in those days, was deemed worth a historian's while. And yet I was immediately struck by the great historical interest of this new source: it revealed a previously unknown dialectical milieu and thus effectively opened an entire new chapter in the history of medieval Arabic philosophy and Islamic theology, as I endeavoured to show in the first article I published. Thankfully, the field has now moved on, such that our twelfth-century source no longer belongs to the onset of the 'later' 'dark ages' of Islamic thought, but occupies a central place in what I term the middle period.

The present monograph, consisting of an interpretive study and a critical edition of al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk*, is the most substantial output to date of a wider long-term project on the development of Avicennan philosophy and Ashʿarī theology during this middle period, which culminates by the end of the twelfth century in the systematic philosophical theology of al-Rāzī. The book, as I would like to think, offers much more than 'an edition with an extended introduction'; for over half of the interpretive part consists of focused case studies that examine not only a selection of al-Masʿūdī's metaphysical aporias, but also their background starting with Avicenna. There remains much room, of course, for further research: most obviously, several discussions in the *Shukūk* await study, and so does the later reception of al-Masʿūdī's criticisms and ideas, especially in al-Rāzī's thought.

The publication of this monograph has been made possible with generous support recently, and gratefully, received from the Arts and Humanities Research Council for my project, 'The Reception of Avicennan Philosophy in the Twelfth Century'. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the numerous colleagues who assisted in various ways with this project, both directly and indirectly, in particular to Taneli Kukkonen who read an entire draft and provided invaluable feedback, and Frank Griffel who read, and commented on, Sections 1.2–3 which cover al-Masʿūdī's biography and oeuvre, as well as to Roshdi Rashed, Judith Pfeiffer, Himmet Taşkömür, Robert Wisnovsky, Evrim Binbaş, Laura Hassan, Abdurrahman Atçıl, Tuna Tunagöz, Samar Mikati Kaissi and Carla Chalhoub. I am grateful to the editors of the Islamic Philosophy, The-

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Introduction

This volume sheds vital new light on the middle period of medieval Arabic philosophy and Islamic theology.[1] Traditional, nineteenth- and twentieth-century accounts of this period have advocated a narrative in which Ashʿarī theologians launched an offensive against philosophy, resulting in its decline in later Islamic culture, or at least in Sunnism.[2] The *loci classicus* of this offensive are considered to be al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (*The Incoherence of the Philosophers*) and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 606/1210) comprehensive commentary on Avicenna's (d. 428/1037) *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* (*Pointers and Reminders*), which are often interpreted as implementing the same basic agenda: to undermine the philosophical tradition of Neoplatonised Aristotelianism in defence of a theological orthodoxy. It is now becoming increasingly evident that this reading is reductive and simplistic, and that to gain a sounder and more critical understanding of intellectual activity in this pivotal period further empirical investigation is needed. To this end, an urgent desideratum is to redress the orphaned status of the illustrious 'classics' of our traditional canon, such as the two texts just mentioned, by 'repopulating' the interim gaps. Key to this contextualisation is the exploring of 'twilight' sources, by which I mean sources that attest intellectual tensions, often expressed dialectically, between established thought systems and nascent trends, and hence reveal gradual shifts within their milieu and epoch, which at times lead up to a more definitive turn.

In the major shifts that were taking place during the twelfth century, particularly in the interim decades separating al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī, one of the most important transitional sources is Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī's *al-Mabāḥith wa-l-Shukūk ʿalā kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* (*Investigations and Objections on the Pointers and Reminders*, henceforth the *Shukūk*), as I argued when I first brought this source to light.[3] Al-Masʿūdī's philosophical activity had remained obscure for centuries, though in his lifetime he appears to have been a prominent figure in the East.[4] His *Shukūk*, the earliest extant commentary on Avi-

1 By the middle period, I refer here to the transitional, late classical and early post-classical phase, stretching roughly from the late eleventh century and into the fourteenth century.

2 For a critique of the scholarly trends that underpin this narrative, see Gutas, 'The Study of Arabic Philosophy'.

3 Shihadeh, 'From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī', 148 ff.

4 Previously, he received occasional mention as an astronomer, but many secondary sources

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cenna's *Ishārāt*, should be classed as an aporetic commentary, that is to say, a commentary which targets one or more works of an earlier authoritative figure with the exclusive purpose of raising problems, or objections, on selected points therein. In the fifteen sections of this text, the author raises philosophical complaints against an array of discussions on physics and metaphysics in the *Ishārāt*, and he frequently submits and defends alternative views of his own. The discussions display the influence of al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut* and Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī's (d. before 560/1164–1165) *Muʿtabar*, two sources that al-Masʿūdī cites and praises highly.

While al-Masʿūdī's text was probably not the first commentary to be written on the *Ishārāt*, it is the earliest historically significant commentary. It provoked the commentator's younger contemporary Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī to compose a dedicated response, *Jawābāt al-masāʾil al-bukhāriyya* (*Response to the* [*Philosophical*] *Problems from Bukhara*)—thus titled because al-Masʿūdī at the time was based in the city. The *Jawābāt*, as I showed elsewhere, is most probably al-Rāzī's earliest extant philosophical work, and it was followed approximately a decade later by his well-known full commentary on the *Ishārāt*, which inaugurated the long and venerable commentarial tradition on this Avicennan text.[5] Later on, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) had access to al-Rāzī's *Jawābāt*, and through it to al-Masʿūdī's objections, both of which get cited in his own commentary on the *Ishārāt*.[6] However, being an aporetic commentary, as opposed to an exegetical one, al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk* bears an almost accidental affinity to this later commentarial tradition, for despite having the same target text, in terms of form and objectives it genealogically belongs to the genre of aporias, which includes such texts as Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's (d. 313/925) aporias on Galen and Ibn al-Haytham's (d. ca. 430/1039) aporias on Ptolemy.

In two main respects, however, the interest of al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk* goes well beyond its marking the nascence of the commentarial tradition on Avicenna. Foremost is the vital insight that, when read in context, the text affords us into the development of philosophy and rational theology in the East during

conflated him with the twelfth-century astrologer Ẓahīr al-Dīn Abū l-Maḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Masʿūd ibn Muḥammad al-Ghaznawī, author of *Kifāyat al-taʿlīm fī ṣināʿat al-tanjīm*. On this confusion, see Āl Dāwūd, '*Jahān-i dānish*'.

5 On al-Rāzī's *Jawābāt* and *Sharḥ*, see, respectively, Shihadeh, 'Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Response', 2–3; 'Al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ*'. On the early tradition of commentaries on the *Ishārāt*, see Wisnovsky, 'Avicennism and Exegetical Practice'.

6 Al-Ṭūsī, *Ḥall*, 2, 189–190; 2, 354; 2, 366. In a further discussion, he appears to refer to al-Masʿūdī as 'one objector', without naming him (*Ḥall*, 3, 10), although Badr al-Dīn al-Tustarī reports that Afḍal al-Dīn al-Kāshī (d. 610/1213–1214) is intended (*Muḥākamāt*, f. 51[a]).

the twelfth century. It throws light on the dialectical milieu within which this development unfolded, and provides major new evidence attesting the rise of a counter-Avicennan current, a rather inhomogeneous movement whose terms of reference were borrowed, first and foremost, from both al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut* and Abū l-Barakāt's critical engagement with Avicennan philosophy. Within this current, al-Masʿūdī represents a 'softer', more philosophically involved trend, whereas his colleague Ibn Ghaylān al-Balkhī (d. ca. 590/1194) advocates a 'harder', more strident line.[7] Yet even though the *Shukūk* is not injected with the religious polemic characteristic of al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut* and Ibn Ghaylān's refutations of Avicenna, most of the metaphysical problems in the book, in particular those bearing on theological themes, exhibit underlying commitments and motives that are best described as theological, as the present study will reveal. This counter-Avicennan current stood in contrast to mainstream, traditional Avicennism, which elaborated Avicennan philosophy and defended it against its critics, especially Abū l-Barakāt. A key feature of al-Masʿūdī and Ibn Ghaylān, as representatives of the counter-Avicennan current, is that while they engaged dialectically with Avicennan philosophy, each in his own distinctive way, they did not construct a coherent alternative system—a feature that, to an extent, also characterises large areas of al-Ghazālī's theological thinking. As such, they are symptomatic of an intermediate transitional phase, in which an established thought system undergoes criticism and some novel and inchoate ideas are mooted, but a new, fully fledged system has yet to take shape.

In comes Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who—as he tells us in his autobiographical collection of debates he had with some contemporaries in the East, the *Munāẓarāt*—interacts personally with al-Masʿūdī and Ibn Ghaylān.[8] It is almost certain that he also interacts with traditional Avicennists.[9] He is highly critical of both sides, or 'parties' (*farīqayn*): of counter-Avicennists in view of their preoccupation with the raising of objections (*iʿtirāḍ*) against Avicennan philosophy while showing little interest, in his assessment, in more constructive, systematic inquiry, and of traditional Avicennists for their uncritical following (*taqlīd*) and entrenched support of philosophical authority, a thor-

7 On Ibn Ghaylān, see Shihadeh, 'Post-Ghazālian Critic'. I am careful to use 'counter-Avicennan', rather than 'anti-Avicennan', as the latter implies sweeping, even absolute, opposition to Avicennan philosophy, which is certainly not true of al-Masʿūdī, nor even of Ibn Ghaylān. I also use 'current', rather than 'school', as the latter suggests a higher degree of doctrinal and methodical coherence and group identity.

8 Shihadeh, 'From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī', 157ff.; 'Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Response', introduction.

9 For some evidence, see Shihadeh, 'Avicenna's Corporeal Form', 383.

oughly unphilosophic attitude.[10] In response, he develops his own analytical and dialectical method, which is both critical but at the same time systematic and constructive. Without a doubt, therefore, his influential philosophical and theological synthesis is the end product of this dialectical milieu. In other words, without the dialectical milieu just described—specifically, without al-Masʿūdī and the current he represented—there would have been no Fakhr al-Dīn.

The *Shukūk* is also of great interest on account of its philosophical content and the later reception of the aporias it raises. The text itself appears to have had limited circulation in post-Rāzian philosophy. Al-Ṭūsī, as noted, had access to it, probably only through al-Rāzī's *Jawābāt*, while Badr al-Dīn al-Tustarī (d. 732/1332), who wrote a text 'adjudicating' between al-Rāzī's and al-Ṭūsī's full commentaries on the *Ishārāt*, appears to have had access to both al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk* and al-Rāzī's *Jawābāt*.[11] One extant manuscript copy of the *Shukūk* had Mullā Ṣadrā al-Shīrāzī (d. 1050/1640) among its owners, though whether or not it had an impact on him is yet to be seen.[12] What is no less important is the later history of the problems. For not only does he write a dedicated response, the *Jawābāt*, al-Rāzī also discusses some of al-Masʿūdī's puzzles, without identifying their source, in his *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* and other philosophical works, through which they find their way into the later tradition of commentaries on the *Ishārāt* and the wider Arabic philosophical tradition. Although outside the *Jawābāt* and the *Munāẓarāt*, as far as I am aware, al-Masʿūdī is never mentioned by name in any of al-Rāzī's works, it is nevertheless possible to identify some of the problems originally raised by him. For example, the problem discussed in Section 1 of the *Shukūk*, as I show elsewhere, is treated in al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* and other works.[13] Another example can be found in the course of the discussion of the nature of vision in al-Rāzī's highly influential philosophical work the *Mabāḥith*: he quotes a lengthy passage from the *Shukūk*, introduced by 'The proponents of extramission argue', along with an illustrative diagram, and concludes by writing, 'This discussion was set out by an eminent contemporary (*aḥad fuḍalāʾ al-zamān*), and we have reproduced it here verbatim'.[14] It will take several studies to assess the full extent of al-Rāzī's reception of the contents of the *Shukūk*, but the bottom line is that if a puzzle

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10 Shihadeh, 'From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī', 170; 'Al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ*'; al-Rāzī, *Mabāḥith*, 1, 3–4.

11 For instance, al-Tustarī, *Muḥākamāt*, ff. 7^{a}; 51^{b} (where both texts are cited).

12 See p. 172 below.

13 Shihadeh, 'Al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ*'; 'Avicenna's Corporeal Form'.

14 Al-Rāzī, *Mabāḥith*, 2, 315–317; cf. *Shukūk*, 225–227.

is treated in this work, our default assumption should be that it is attested, in some form or other, in corresponding discussions in al-Rāzī's works.

The present volume includes four in-depth case studies covering five sections of the *Shukūk*, all treating metaphysical problems. Our focused probings are motivated first and foremost by the inherent philosophical interest of each of these problems, and secondarily by what they reveal to us concerning the author's 'agenda', sources and *modus operandi* in the *Shukūk*. Each case study, therefore, is more or less a self-contained investigation, not only of al-Masʿūdī and his text, but also of the earlier debate at its background, starting with Avicenna and then turning, as relevant, to other thinkers and schools of thought, above all al-Ghazālī and Abū l-Barakāt. At several points in this exploration, we shall reinterpret these earlier sources in ways that diverge from current readings.

Our first two case studies focus on al-Masʿūdī's treatment of two principal themes in Avicenna's metaphysics, namely efficient causation and potentiality. The overall thrust of al-Masʿūdī's criticism in both cases is to counter some of the underpinnings of Avicenna's eternalist cosmology, and to provide the groundwork for a creationist philosophy, that is, a philosophical cosmogony according to which the world came to be in time, *ex nihilo*. The first case study, in Chapter 3, examines Section 9 of the *Shukūk*, which treats an aspect of Avicenna's theories of efficient causality and the existence of things possible of existence, particularly the problem of whether an originated thing depends on its agent for the full duration of its continued existence or only at the point of its coming-to-be. Attacking the case that Avicenna makes for the former position, al-Masʿūdī works out a unique defence for the latter position. Chapter 4 then examines Sections 10 and 14 of the *Shukūk*, in the first of which al-Masʿūdī targets Avicenna's theory of the ontology of possibility, specifically his contention that before a thing comes to be, its possibility must obtain in a substrate.

In our third and fourth case studies, we turn to comparatively narrower problems treated in the *Shukūk*. Chapter 5 examines al-Masʿūdī's refutation of Avicenna's proof from possibility for the existence of the Necessary of Existence through Itself. He argues that, considered in itself, the proof is unsound, and moreover that a premise from which it starts is inconsistent with other views held by Avicenna. Finally, in Chapter 6, we turn to Section 1 of the *Shukūk*, in which al-Masʿūdī raises a complaint against the strand of hylomorphism advocated by Avicenna, as represented by his proof of prime matter, and champions the competing hylomorphism of Abū l-Barakāt.

In the first place, however, we need to introduce the author and the text, and this we shall do in the first two chapters, respectively. We proceed, in

Chapter 1, by contextualising al-Masʿūdī's philosophical thinking and we then attempt to raise him from obscurity by piecing together the fragmentary data available to us to reconstruct his biography and oeuvre, to the extent possible, and by mining another philosophical work of his for evidence of theological commitments. I argue that while such evidence is ample, in the final analysis the man remains quite elusive. In Chapter 2, we hone in on the *Shukūk* as we overview the contents of our text and explore its overall motives and *modus operandi*, partly on the basis of the case studies just outlined.

CHAPTER 1

Al-Masʿūdī's Life and Career, in Context

1.1 The Context: Eastern Avicennism in the Twelfth Century

The principal context within which al-Masʿūdī's career and philosophical output must be situated is the mid-twelfth-century Avicennan milieu in the East, particularly in Khurasan and Transoxania. I discuss this in more detail elsewhere, so the following is a brief overview.[1] During the first half of the twelfth century, Khurasan flourished as the main centre of philosophical activity east of Baghdad, due largely to the patronage provided to a wide range of scholarship, including philosophy, by Sanjar ibn Malik Shāh, the Saljuq governor (*malik*) of Khurasan between 490/1097–511/1118 and then sultan of the Great Saljuqs until his death in 552/1157.[2] Alongside Nishapur, the city of Marw, which Sanjar declared as his capital when he became sultan in 511/1097, attracted some of the most accomplished philosophers and scholars, some of whom had direct links to the sultan. This vibrant intellectual culture, however, came to an abrupt end in the year 548/1153, when Sanjar was vanquished by the Oghuz Turks, who invaded Marw massacring its inhabitants, including numerous scholars.[3] After this date, the two cities go into decline, and scholars, including Khurasanians, turn to neighbouring regions in search of patronage, either northwards to the Khwārazm-shāhs in Khwārazm or the Qarākhānids in Transoxania, or eastwards to the Ghaznavids.

As I showed in a previous study, two intellectual trends attested in this milieu are especially pertinent to al-Masʿūdī.[4] The first is mainstream traditional Avicennism, which operated very much within the framework of Avicennan philosophy, developing, refining and defending the system, generally without critiquing it in fundamental ways.[5] This school of thought is repre-

1 I do this in a forthcoming publication provisionally titled, 'The Avicennan Milieu and the Rise of Neo-Ashʿarism'.

2 On him, see 'Sandjar b. Malik Shāh', *EI2*.

3 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 11, 116–121. On the Oghuz sacking and pillage of Nishapur, see Bulliet, *Patricians of Nishapur*, 76 ff.

4 Shihadeh, 'From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī'; also, 'Post-Ghazālian Critic'.

5 This current declines in the second half of the century, as it is superseded by the school of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. However, traces of traditional Avicennism persist into the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, a case in point being the anonymous work titled *al-Nukat*

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sented in the first half of the twelfth century by four key figures, all of whom based in Khurasan. The first is al-Lawkarī (d. ca. 517/1123), who studied with Avicenna's most prominent student Bahmanyār ibn al-Marzubān (d. 458/1066) and wrote the extant philosophical compendium titled *Bayān al-ḥaqq*, which is based closely on the works of Avicenna and Bahmanyār. Based in Marw, he is credited with the spread of Avicennan philosophy in Khurasan.[6] The second is ʿUmar al-Khayyām (d. 517/1126), who was based mainly in Nishapur, and for a period in Marw. The third is the philosopher and physician Sharaf al-Zamān al-Īlāqī, reportedly a student of al-Lawkarī and al-Khayyām, who died in 536/1141 when he was in the company of Sanjar in the battle of Qaṭwān, near Samarqand, which the latter lost to the Qarā Khitāi.[7] The fourth is ʿUmar ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī (d. mid 6th/12th c.), who studied with al-Īlāqī, probably in Nishapur, and dedicated one of his works to Sanjar, titled *al-Risāla al-Sanjariyya*.[8]

Alongside traditional Avicennism, a different group of scholars engaged with Avicenna critically, and they can be treated as a distinct current. As I showed elsewhere, this current was initiated by both al-Ghazālī's critique of philosophy in his well-known *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* and Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī's work the *Muʿtabar*, which offered a philosophical critique of various aspects of Avicennan philosophy. There is evidence that Abū l-Barakāt's philosophy was spreading eastwards from as early as the beginning of the twelfth century. For instance, the Kākūyid ruler of Yazd, ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Farāmarz ibn ʿAlī ibn Farāmarz (fl. 516/1121–1122), was reportedly a philosopher who wrote a book titled *Muhjat al-tawḥīd* championing Abū l-Barakāt's teachings.[9] Another philosopher, Maḥmūd al-Khwārazmī, studied with Abū l-Barakāt and later, in 519/1124–1125, was met in Marw by Ẓahīr al-Dīn al-Bayhaqī.[10] The counter-Avicennan current is represented, in the middle of the century, most notably by our Masʿūdī and Ibn Ghaylān al-Balkhī, both of whom drew inspiration from al-Ghazālī and Abū l-Barakāt. Another figure associated with this current is the well-known theologian al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), who criticised Avicennan philosophy

wa-l-fawāʾid (MS Istanbul, Feyzullah Efendi 1217; on which, see Michot, '*Al-Nukat wa-l-fawāʾid*').

6 Al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimma*, 126; on al-Lawkarī's biography, see Marcotte, 'Preliminary Notes'; Griffel, 'Between al-Ghazālī and Abū l-Barakāt', 50–55; on his main philosophical work *Bayān al-ḥaqq*, see Janssens, 'Al-Lawkarī's Reception'.

7 Al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimma*, 131. On this battle, see Biran, *Empire of the Qara Khitai*, 41–47.

8 For the publication details, see the Bibliography.

9 Al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimma*, 117–118.

10 Al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimma*, 161.

in his *Muṣāraʿat al-falāsifa*, *Nihāyat al-aqdām* and some brief objections that he wrote on certain views in Avicenna's *Najāt* and sent to Ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī.[11]

Let us linger a little on al-Ghazālī's criticism of philosophy. His greatest innovation on this front was not simply to offer a dedicated criticism of a range of specific philosophical theories, but rather to transform *kalām* at a very fundamental structural level; it was this shift away from the earlier Ashʿarī conception of *kalām* that gave us the *Tahāfut*.[12] Classical Ashʿarism, epitomised by al-Ghazālī's own teacher al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085), had already developed a highly systematic theology largely in response to the Baṣran Muʿtazila, but nonetheless one that drew extensively on Muʿtazilī theories and method. So it was in conversation with Muʿtazilism that Ashʿarism formulated its classical theological system, with its established doctrines and theories, arguments and structures. By the late eleventh century, however, the Muʿtazila had ceased to be a real threat: their political backing and influence had effectively come to an end, primarily as a consequence of pro-Sunni Saljuq policies, and the school was no longer producing representatives of note within Sunnism, at least from al-Ghazālī's point of view. The Ashʿarī-Muʿtazilī battle effectively over, Ashʿarī orthodoxy had to face off new threats, particularly Avicennan philosophy and Ismāʿīlism. Al-Ghazālī was aware both of the urgency to address these two schools of thought, and of the fact that the system he inherited from his Ashʿarī predecessors was, to a great extent, outdated and burdened by the theories and extensive argumentative structures developed in its prior dialectic with Muʿtazilism. He overcomes this challenge by reorienting *kalām*, shifting its primary focus from system-building to the dialectical defence of the core doctrines of orthodoxy against the teachings of opposing belief systems.[13] These core doctrines stem from the teachings of revelation, and they alone, to the exclusion of the theoretical underpinnings developed by earlier Ashʿarīs (most obviously, their atomist physics), deserve to be defended. To al-Ghazālī, the *kalām* genre *par excellence* hence becomes the dedicated refutation (*radd*), represented by his best *kalām* work *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (completed in 488/1095)[14] and his anti-Ismāʿīlī works, rather than the genre of the systematic manual or summa,

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11 Al-Shahrastānī's objections and al-Sāwī's responses are transmitted in MS Istanbul, Revan Köşkü 2042, ff. 177ᵃ–189ᵃ.

12 This shift is discussed in more detail in Shihadeh, 'From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī', 142 ff.; and 'Al-Ghazālī and *Kalām*'.

13 Al-Ghazālī's demotion of *kalām* from a science to a dialectical art might be influenced by earlier philosophical views of the discipline. On Avicenna's position, see Gutas, 'Logic of Theology'.

14 See the editor's introduction to the *Tahāfut*, ix.

represented by his *Iqtiṣād*, a work in which he reluctantly makes frequent compromises, as he himself admits, to the convention of earlier *kalām* (*al-rasm*, or *al-kalām al-rasmī*, as he calls it).[15]

Al-Ghazālī's new style of critical, dialectical theology was continued by Ibn Ghaylān al-Balkhī, who came to be a career critic of Avicenna, as I showed elsewhere.[16] Avicennan philosophy continued to proliferate in the early twelfth century, including—worryingly for some—outside the elite circles of specialist philosophers, among religious scholars who had no prior philosophical learning.[17] Rising to the challenge, Ibn Ghaylān argues, under al-Ghazālī's influence, that traditional systematic *kalām* had become out of date and that the discipline must urgently revive itself by shifting its focus to the defence of the orthodox creed through the refuting of the greatest and most immediate threat it is facing at the time, namely, Avicennan philosophy. 'For nowadays', he writes, 'we have no opponents other than the philosophers, who have been a source of corruption in the world'.[18] This stance is typified by Ibn Ghaylān's most substantial extant work, *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, which defends the doctrine of the creation of the world in time against Avicenna's arguments and refutes his doctrine of the pre-eternity of the world.[19]

Traditional Avicennists in turn responded to the counter-Avicennan current, especially to the criticisms of Abū l-Barakāt. I am unaware of any responses in twelfth-century eastern Avicennism to al-Ghazālī, which probably indicates that the *Tahāfut* was brushed aside as a work of *kalām*, and as such deserving of little attention. The most concrete example of the traditional Avicennist rejoinder is Ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī's extant work titled *Nahj al-taqdīs*, which responds to Abū l-Barakāt's critique of Avicenna's views on the problem of God's knowledge of particulars.[20] A further example is a dedicated response to Abū l-Barakāt's *Muʿtabar* penned by the author of *Tatimmat Ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, Ẓahīr al-Dīn al-Bayhaqī (d. 565/1170), and titled *al-Mushtahar fī naqḍ al-Muʿtabar*.[21] And in a short epistle, the 12th-century mathematician Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Sālār lambastes

15 See Shihadeh, 'Al-Ghazālī and *Kalām*'.

16 Shihadeh, 'Post-Ghazālian Critic', 139–147.

17 Michot, 'Pandémie avicennienne'; Shihadeh, 'From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī', 148 ff. Also relevant is Gutas, 'Philosophy in the Twelfth Century', for the situation in Baghdad.

18 Ibn Ghaylān, *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, 16; cf. Shihadeh, 'Post-Ghazālian Critic', 143–145.

19 See also the curious criticism he wrote on the book of simple drugs in Avicenna's *Canon*, published and examined in my article, 'Post-Ghazālian Critic'.

20 Al-Sāwī, *Nahj al-taqdīs*. On al-Sāwī's criticism of Abū l-Barakāt, see Shihadeh, 'Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Response', 7.

21 Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 4, 1763.

Abū l-Barakāt for his criticism of an Avicennan proof, which happens to be the subject of Section 2 of al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk*.[22] Towards the end of the century, the anonymous author of *al-Nukat wa-l-fawāʾid*, a staunch Avicennist, attacks Abū l-Barakāt, Ibn Ghaylān al-Balkhī as well as the new critical reader of Avicenna, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.[23]

One incident related by al-Bayhaqī in his biography of the aforementioned Kākūyid, ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Farāmarz ibn ʿAlī, reveals the attitudes underlying the rivalry between traditional Avicennists and the counter-Avicennan current.[24] ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla reportedly once asked ʿUmar al-Khayyām for his opinion on the objections (*iʿtirāḍāt*) raised by Abū l-Barakāt on Avicennan doctrines, and received the following answer: 'Abū l-Barakāt failed to understand the views of Abū ʿAlī [Avicenna], and is not qualified even to comprehend his views. So what makes him qualified to object to him, and to raise problems (*shukūk*) concerning his views!' For this personal attack, al-Khayyām receives a stern reprimand from ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla, who advises him to behave as a philosopher by confuting the views of a person using demonstrations, as opposed to resorting to abuse, as a 'foolish dialectician' would be inclined to do.

It is against this dialectical backdrop that al-Masʿūdī reads, and engages with, Avicenna. As noted, he belongs to the counter-Avicennan current, but all the same he differs greatly from Ibn Ghaylān in both his objectives and approach. One major question that motivates our present study is where exactly al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk* ought to be situated in this milieu, and the extent to which it is inspired by each of al-Ghazālī's 'critical theology' and Abū l-Barakāt's 'critical philosophy'.

1.2 Al-Masʿūdī's Biography

Little is known about al-Masʿūdī's life. Some of the available data is unreliable or conjectural, and concrete dateable points in his life are few and far between. He receives little more than passing mentions in a handful of contemporaneous and later sources, and a very short entry in Sadīd al-Dīn ʿAwfī's *Lubāb al-albāb*, a work on the biographies of Persian poets dating to the early thirteenth century. He takes centre stage in only one extant contemporaneous source—namely, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (544/1149–606/1210) autobiographical collection of the

22 Al-Sālār, *Untitled*. On the problem, see pp. 60–61.

23 Michot, '*Al-nukat wa-l-fawāʾid*', *passim*.

24 Al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimma*, 117–118.

debates he engaged in during his travels in Transoxania, the *Munāẓarāt jarat fī bilād mā warāʾ al-nahr*, which truly brings al-Masʿūdī to life, though in a rather unflattering light, as we shall see. Four of the sixteen debates recorded in al-Rāzī's work—debates 8, 9, 10 and 11—are with al-Masʿūdī, and they provide valuable biographical information, particularly on his scholarly sources, interests and character (at least through al-Rāzī's eyes).

His name, to begin with, is Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Masʿūd ibn Muḥammad al-Masʿūdī al-Marwazī, and he is frequently given the title 'al-imām', or 'al-shaykh al-imām'.[25] The incipit of a manuscript of one of his works gives him the *nisba* al-Bukhārī, that of another gives him the *nisba* al-Samarqandī.[26] In one early manuscript, he is described as 'the most virtuous and perfect of the critical investigators (*muḥaqqiq*) of Transoxania and Khurasan', which probably highlights the links he had to both regions.[27] In my assessment, he was born in the first quarter of the twelfth century, most probably in the second decade of the century. Originating from Marw in Khurasan, Sharaf al-Dīn appears to descend from a well-established family of Shāfiʿīs in the city, which claims descent from the famous companion of the Prophet, ʿAbdallāh ibn Masʿūd—hence the *nisba* al-Masʿūdī and, as we shall see, the recurrence of the name Masʿūd and to a lesser extent ʿAbdallāh in the lineage.[28] ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Samʿānī (506/1113–562/1166)—himself a prominent Shāfiʿī based in Marw—provides details on four earlier family members, the earliest and most eminent being Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Masʿūdī (d. soon after 420/1029), who was a student of the well-known Shāfiʿī Abū Bakr ʿAbdallāh ibn Aḥmad al-Qaffāl (d. 417/1026) and wrote a commentary on al-Muzanī's juristic work, the *Mukhtaṣar*.[29] Another family member mentioned by al-Samʿānī is likely to be the grandfather of our Sharaf al-Dīn—namely, Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd ibn Masʿūd ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn Masʿūd ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Masʿūd al-Masʿūdī (d. 528/1134), who was closely linked

25 For instance, Ibn Ghaylān, *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, 11; 111; 114; al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 31; 32; 35; MS Istanbul, Bağdatlı Vehbi 834, f. 1[a] (the title page of an early-7th/13th-century copy of *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba al-gharrāʾ*); Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 2, 653. The *nisba* 'al-Marwazī' appears on the title page of MS Istanbul, Bağdatlı Vehbi 834, f. 1[a].

26 Respectively, al-Masʿūdī, *Majmaʿ al-aḥkām*, 29, and *Jahān-i dānish*, MS Istanbul, Beyazıt 4639, f1[b].

27 This appears on the title page of MS Istanbul, Ayasofya 2602 (f. 2[a]), which contains a copy of al-Masʿūdī's *Jahān-i dānish*, dated 654/1256.

28 On his Shāfiʿī affiliation, see also pp. 26–28 below.

29 Al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 11, 308. On Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Masʿūdī, see also al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 4, 171–174. Abū Bakr ʿAbdallāh ibn Aḥmad al-Qaffāl (on whom see al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 5, 53–62) should not be confused with Abū Bakr al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī (d. 365/976), also a Marwazī.

to the Saljuq sultan Sanjar.[30] Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad's son, Abū l-Fatḥ Masʿūd (483/1090–568/1173), who would be Sharaf al-Dīn's father, was a friend of al-Samʿānī, studied jurisprudence with his father, and reportedly served for several years as the preacher at the old mosque of Marw.[31] That Sharaf al-Dīn is likely to be the son of Abū l-Fatḥ is suggested by his name, dates, Marwazī origin and, as we shall see, Shāfiʿī affiliation.

Al-Masʿūdī in all likelihood started his studies in his native Marw, which, as noted, flourished as a major hub for philosophical, scientific and other scholarly activity in the first half of the twelfth century. His grandfather's links to Sanjar may have given the young Sharaf al-Dīn easier access to the intellectual elite of the city, most notably philosophers. We have no reliable information, however, on his teachers, or on whether he attended the Niẓāmiyya college in Marw like his colleague Ibn Ghaylān al-Balkhī who enrolled at the college in 523/1129.[32] In astronomy, I argue below that al-Masʿūdī is likely to have studied with al-Qaṭṭān al-Marwazī (d. 548/1153), and that there is a slight possibility that he studied with Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Kharaqī (d. 533/1138).[33] As to his philosophical study, we have only two pieces of evidence, both recorded approximately two centuries later by the biographer al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363).

The first is the following chain of transmission (*silsila*), which purports that al-Masʿūdī read Avicenna's *Ishārāt* with the philosopher ʿUmar al-Khayyām:

> The shaykh and imām Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm, known as Ibn al-Akfānī [d. 749/1348],[34] […] related to me: I read the *Ishārāt* of the Master Abū ʿAlī ibn Sīnā with the shaykh Shams al-Dīn al-Shirwānī al-Ṣūfī [d. 699/1300][35] at the Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ *khānqāh* in Cairo towards the end of the year [6]98[/1299] and the beginning of [69]9[/1299]. He told me: I read it, alongside its commentary, with its commentator Khwāja Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī [d. 672/1274]. He said: I read it with the imām

30 Al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 11, 308; idem., *Muntakhab*, 3, 1457–1458. Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd is the grandson of the brother of the aforementioned Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh.

31 Al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 11, 309; *Muntakhab*, 3, 1725–1727; *Taḥbīr*, 2, 303–304. The 'old mosque' (*al-jāmiʿ al-aqdam*) of Marw, as al-Samʿānī calls it, was the main mosque of the Shāfiʿīs, which is confirmed by the fact that al-Samʿānī's uncle preached there (*Taḥbīr*, 1, 403).

32 Ibn Ghaylān, *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, 10. More on Ibn Ghaylān below.

33 See p. 23 below.

34 On whom, see 'Ibn al-Akfānī', *EI2*. Al-Ṣafadī himself read part of the *Ishārāt* with him (*Wāfī*, 2, 25).

35 The shaykh of al-Khānqāh al-Shihābiyya in Damascus, who was versed, according to al-Ṣafadī, in astrology, philosophy and 'other rational sciences' (*Wāfī*, 2, 142).

> Athīr al-Dīn al-Mufaḍḍal al-Abharī [d. 663/1264]. He said: I read it with the shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Miṣrī [d. 618/1222]. He said: I read it with the great imām Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Rāzī. He said: I read it with the shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Masʿūdī. He said: I read it with the shaykh Abū l-Fatḥ ʿUmar,[36] known as Ibn al-Khayyām. He said: I read it with Bahmanyār, the student of the Master. He said: I read it with its author, the Master Abū ʿAlī ibn Sīnā [d. 428/1037].[37]

To say that one person 'read' a text with another does not necessarily imply that the contents of the text were studied closely and extensively with the latter, even if the text is philosophical in nature. The process in fact often involves little more than the 'recipient' reading the text, and perhaps discussing a small number of points with the 'transmitter', and by virtue of this formal transmission the recipient becomes qualified himself to transmit the text in the same manner. A text as short as Avicenna's *Ishārāt* can be read and transmitted in its entirety in one day. However, even on the assumption that al-Masʿūdī and al-Khayyām were only very briefly in contact, the plausibility of such a meeting between the two hinges on whether or not they could have overlapped both geographically and chronologically. The chances of them overlapping, in my assessment, are extremely slim. For although later in his life al-Khayyām was based in Marw, he returned at some unknown date to his native Nishapur, where he remained until his death in the year 517/1123–1124.[38] To allow al-Masʿūdī to meet al-Khayyām at an age at which he would have been able to read a rather difficult philosophical text, we would have to push his date of birth back to 500/1106 at the latest. Such an early dating, however, is untenable, considering both that all dateable points in al-Masʿūdī's life are concentrated in the second half of the twelfth century and that he does not appear to be in his eighties in al-Rāzī's portrayal of him around 582/1186.[39] Further doubts on the authenticity of the above chain of transmission emerge when we consider whether Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī ever met al-Rāzī's student Quṭb al-Dīn al-Miṣrī. So, on the overall weight of evidence, it appears that al-Masʿūdī could not have met, and studied with, al-Khayyām, and accordingly that the above chain was

36 The edition reads Muḥammad rather than ʿUmar, which is likely to be a scribal or editorial error, especially that the volume was edited on the basis of a single manuscript (the editor's introduction, *alif–bāʾ*). The two names may be confused in some styles of handwriting, with the *mīm-ḥāʾ-mīn* resembling the shape of a *ʿayn*.

37 Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 2, 142–143.

38 On al-Khayyām's death date, see Griffel, 'Weitere philosophische Autoren'.

39 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, Sections 8, 9, 10 and 11.

constructed later, partly on the basis of speculation on who studied the *Ishārāt* with whom.

Elsewhere, in his biographical entry on the grammarian Ibn al-Bāqillānī al-Naḥwī al-Ḥillī (568/1173–637/1239), al-Ṣafadī writes that this figure 'studied philosophy with al-Masʿūdī, the disciple (*ghulām*) of ʿUmar ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī, author of the *Baṣāʾir*'.[40] However, this study reportedly took place in Baghdad, to which Ibn al-Bāqillānī moved in his childhood from his native Ḥilla. Al-Ṣafadī reports that Ibn al-Bāqillānī stayed for a while in Shushtar, in Khūzistān, to teach grammar to Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī (d. 612/1216), the son of the Abbasid caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh. But there is no evidence that he travelled east of Khūzistān at any point, or that Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī travelled west of Khurasan, so the two are unlikely to have met. That said, it is perfectly plausible that al-Masʿūdī did indeed study with Ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī, considering that in the second quarter of the twelfth century the two were based in Khurasan and that in one work al-Masʿūdī uses laudatory titles in references to al-Sāwī.[41] Having himself received the *Ishārāt* through the foregoing chain of transmission, al-Ṣafadī most probably had some knowledge of the identity of al-Masʿūdī, and this may have found its way into his entry on Ibn al-Bāqillānī.

By the year 549/1155, al-Masʿūdī was based in Transoxania, most probably in Samarqand, to the north-east of Marw. His presence there is evidenced, first of all, in his astronomical work *al-Kifāya fī ʿilm al-hayʾa*, which he was in the process of writing in this year.[42] In the discussion of the method for determining the *qibla*, he gives an illustrative example by applying the method to this city.[43] Further evidence situating him in Transoxania around the mid twelfth century appears in his philosophical work *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba al-gharrāʾ*, in the course of his discussion of the concepts 'priority' (*taqaddum*) and 'posteriority' (*taʾakhkhur*). To illustrate how these terms can be used to refer to the relative spatial position of objects, he gives, as an example, 'the precedence of Karmīniyya to Ṭawāwīs for the traveller from Samarqand to Bukhara', or vice versa for those travelling in the opposite direction.[44] Karmīniyya and Ṭawāwīs, respectively, are a town and a village on the Samarqand-Bukhara road, the former being 18 *farsakh*s (approximately 107 km) away from Bukhara, and the latter 8 *farsakh*s (approximately 48 km) away.[45] Al-Masʿūdī's primary target

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40 Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 12, 273. On this figure, see also Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 3, 1027.

41 See the description of *Risālat al-Mukhtaliṭāt* on p. 25 below.

42 The date of the *Kifāya* is discussed on p. 22 below.

43 *Kifāya*, ff. 147ᵃ; 147ᵇ; cf. *Jahān-i dānish*, 147.

44 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, f. 18ᵇ; cf. Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.1, 163 ff.

45 For instance, al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 8, 259–260; 10, 405–408; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 3, 555–556; 4, 368.

readership clearly has local knowledge of Transoxania, and must be located in either Samarqand or Bukhara.

The circumstances that led him to move to Transoxania are unknown. At any rate, his native Marw ceased to be a convenient place for scholars after the Oghuz invasion in the year 548/1153. Following the collapse of the Saljuqs in the city and elsewhere in Khurasan, the Qarākhānids in Transoxania offered scholars patronage and security, as already noted. In an earlier study, I showed that Ibn Ghaylān al-Balkhī—in some ways, as we shall see below, one of the most important colleagues of al-Masʿūdī—appears to have enjoyed the patronage of the Qarākhānids in Samarqand around the same period, and is likely to have held some sort of official position.[46] Al-Masʿūdī too appears to have received Qarākhānid patronage shortly after the middle of the twelfth century, as indicated by two pieces of evidence.

The first is found in al-Masʿūdī's book on astrology *Majmaʿ al-aḥkām*, dated 557/1162, which he dedicates to a certain '*sulṭān* Abū l-Muẓaffar Masʿūd ibn Qilich Qarākhān'.[47] This dedicatee is none other than Abū l-Muẓaffar Qilich Ṭamghāch Khān Masʿūd ibn al-Ḥasan (*r.* 556/1161–566/1170–1171), a Qarākhānid who ruled over Samarqand and Bukhara and used the title 'sultan'.[48] This same figure is praised by al-Masʿūdī's student of philosophy and Ḥanafī jurist, Raḍī al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī (d. 598/1201–1202).[49] It appears, therefore, that al-Masʿūdī made a bid for the Qarākhān's patronage as soon as he acceded, though whether at the time the author was residing in Samarqand or Bukhara is unclear.

A second patron is mentioned in what appears to be some sort of note in a manuscript copy of his philosophical work *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba al-gharrāʾ*, which, as we shall see, was written between 549/1154–1155 and 575/1180.[50] In a brief entry on this text, Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī (d. 1970) correctly identifies it as a commentary on a work by Avicenna, but misidentifies the author as 'the historian al-Masʿūdī, author of *Murūj al-dhahab*', who actually died in 345/956,

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46 Shihadeh, 'Post-Ghazālian Critic', 139–140.

47 Al-Masʿūdī, *Majmaʿ al-aḥkām*, 101. For the date, see the description of the book on p. 24 below. In the published edition, the dedication appears as '*sulṭān* Abū l-Muẓaffar Masʿūd ibn Fatḥ Qarākhān'. 'Fatḥ', however, must be a misreading of 'Qilich'.

48 His name appears in various forms in the sources. A very near match is attested in al-Ẓahīrī al-Samarqandī's *Sindbād-nāma* (p. 8), which is dedicated to Abū l-Muẓaffar Qilich Ṭamghāch Khān ibn Qilich Qarākhān. On him, see, for instance: Ateş's introduction to al-Ẓahīrī's *Sindbād-nāma*, 65–70; Biran, *Empire of the Qara Khitai*, 53–54; 55; 183; Davidovich, 'Karakhanids', 132–133; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 336 (who refers to him, incorrectly, as Masʿūd ibn ʿAlī).

49 Al-Nīsābūrī, *Dīwān*, 21–22; cf. Sulaymānī, '*Nīshāpūrī-yi dar Samarqand*', 48–49.

50 For the date of this text, see p. 21 below.

well before Avicenna.[51] Stating that he came across a manuscript copy of the work, dated 707/1307–1308, at the Gharawiyya Library in Najaf, he provides a brief incipit, which matches the copies available to me. He notes that the book is dedicated to '*al-sayyid* Tāj al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm', though without indicating whether this remark is based on a note in the copy itself. I have not found this detail in other manuscript copies or sources; however, given that al-Ṭihrānī misidentifies the author, and hence does not appear familiar with the text from other sources, we can safely infer that the manuscript copy he consulted is indeed the source of this dedication. So who is this Tāj al-Dīn? One candidate is the well-known theologian Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad (rather than Maḥmūd) ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, who later in his life was based in Marw and closely connected to Sanjar, and accordingly may have met al-Masʿūdī. However, he can be ruled out immediately on the grounds that al-Masʿūdī's book, as already noted, post-dates 549/1154–1155, and *ipso facto* al-Shahrastānī's death in 548/1153, not to mention that his name is an imperfect match.[52] The most probable candidate, rather, has to be Tāj al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm (d. ?), a Samarqand-based vizier or official who served the Qarākhānids in the second half of the 6th/12th century. This Tāj al-Dīn is the dedicatee of the version of the Persian romance *Bakhtiyār-nāma* written by Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Daqāyiqī, who at the time was a preacher at a mosque in Bukhara.[53] The same Tāj al-Dīn is also praised by Rashīd al-Dīn Waṭwāṭ (d. 578/1182).[54] It appears, therefore, that in the third quarter of the twelfth century, most probably soon after the middle of the century, al-Masʿūdī approached Tāj al-Dīn in Samarqand seeking, and probably receiving, his patronage.

It is possible that al-Masʿūdī secured patronage partly as a professional astrologer and astronomer. That he was a practicing, and not only a theoretical, astrologer is suggested by al-Rāzī's report that he once visited him and found him with a group of scholars engaged in a 'studious and painstaking discussion' of the natural disasters that were predicted to occur at the great planetary con-

51 Al-Ṭihrānī, *Dharīʿa*, 13, 223.

52 At some point before his death, al-Shahrastānī returned to his native Shahrastān, a small town in northern Khurasan.

53 The dedicatee's name even appears in the title, *Lumʿat al-sirāj li-ḥaḍrat al-Tāj*. In some manuscript copies, the work is titled *Rāḥat al-arwāḥ fī surūr al-mifrāḥ*. The text confirms that Tāj al-Dīn was based in Samarqand (*Lumʿat al-sirāj*, 39–40; on the text and author, see 'Daqāyeqī Marvazī' and 'Baḵtīār-nāma', *EIr*; 'Daqāyiqī Marvazī', *EI3*).

54 See Rawshan's introduction to *Bakhtiyār-nāma*, 15–16.

junction of 29 Jumādā II 582/14 September 1186.[55] Al-Masʿūdī, on that occasion, offered a passionate defence of astrology.

When he next appears, al-Masʿūdī is settled in Bukhara. He had certainly moved there well before 575/1180, as that year is the *terminus ante quem* for the response that al-Rāzī wrote to the *Shukūk*. Titled *Jawābāt al-masāʾil al-bukhāriyya* (*Response to the* [*Philosophical*] *Problems from Bukhara*), al-Rāzī's work characterises al-Masʿūdī's text as originating from that city.[56] Al-Rāzī tells us in his *Munāẓarāt* that the two met frequently in Bukhara, the only dated meeting taking place in 582/1186.[57]

Sadīd al-Dīn ʿAwfī (late twelfth–early thirteenth century), a Transoxanian contemporary of al-Masʿūdī, describes him as one of the most prominent scholars in the city.[58] Al-Masʿūdī is also the only contemporary figure mentioned by his Samarqand-based colleague Ibn Ghaylān al-Balkhī in his *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, where he refers to him twice with the title 'the most venerable (*al-ajall*) shaykh and imām', and considers him comparable to al-Ghazālī with respect to his sharpness of mind and learning.[59] Likewise, the impression we are given in al-Rāzī's *Munāẓarāt* is that al-Masʿūdī was the most outstanding specialist in philosophy in Bukhara, and probably in the whole of Transoxania, and was surrounded by a circle of scholars. According to al-Rāzī, al-Masʿūdī's students of philosophy included the aforementioned well-known Ḥanafī jurist Raḍī al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī.[60]

Later on in his life, al-Masʿūdī either returns to his native Marw, then under the rule of the Khwārazm-shāhs, or at least visits the city, which is not far from Bukhara. The only piece of evidence that suggests this—and indeed the only glimpse we have into al-Masʿūdī's life past 582/1186—is transmitted by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229) in his entry on the genealogist ʿAzīz al-Dīn Ismāʿīl ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Azwarqānī al-Marwazī (572/1176–after 618/1221), whom he met in Marw in 614/1217.[61] Yāqūt recorded ʿAzīz al-Dīn's exact date of birth, and the names of scholars with whom the latter studied literature and jurisprudence,

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55 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 32–38. On this astronomical event, see Weltecke, 'Die Konjunktion der Planeten im September 1186'; de Callataÿ, 'La Grande Conjonction de 1186'.

56 On the dating of the *Jawābāt*, see Shihadeh, 'Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Response', 2.

57 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 32.

58 ʿAwfī, *Lubāb al-albāb*, 363.

59 Ibn Ghaylān, *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, 11; 111.

60 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 34. On al-Nīsābūrī, see, for instance, Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, 5, 345. One of al-Nīsābūrī's students, Rukn al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī, was a Shāfiʿī, unlike his teacher (al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 24).

61 Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 2, 652–655.

and others from whom he narrated *ḥadīth*.[62] The latter are divided in Yāqūt's account into the following groups: first a group of five, whose location is not specified, then a group of four whom ʿAzīz al-Dīn met in Nishapur, then one narrator whom he met in Rayy, then two whom he met in Baghdad, 'as well as others in Shiraz, Herat, Shushtar and Yazd'. The first group includes 'al-Imām Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Masʿūd al-Masʿūdī', who must be our Masʿūdī, given that the name and title are a perfect match. Although the location of this group is not stated, it is clear from the context that they are all based in ʿAzīz al-Dīn's native Marw, where Yāqūt met him, and that this piece of information was omitted because it was so obvious. (There is, furthermore, no evidence that ʿAzīz al-Dīn ventured anywhere near Bukhara.) And indeed, of the five names given, the three figures that I have been able to identify, other than al-Masʿūdī, all resided in Marw—namely, Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Ṣāʾighī al-Sanjī (d. 598/1201), ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Samʿānī (d. 618/1221), the son of the aforementioned Samʿānī, and Ismāʿīl ibn Muḥammad al-Fāshānī (d. 599/1203), the preacher at the main mosque of Marw.[63] The remaining figure, a certain ʿAbd al-Rashīd ibn Muḥammad al-Zarqī, originates from a village near Marw known as Zarq, and hence is almost certain to be another Marw-based scholar.[64] So, although it is unclear whether al-Masʿūdī had returned permanently to Marw or was only visiting when he met ʿAzīz al-Dīn, his presence there provides further confirmation of his links to the city.

Al-Masʿūdī's death date is unknown, but must be earlier than 605/1208, the completion date of a manuscript in which his name is appended with the formulaic prayer, 'may God's mercy be upon him' (*raḥmat Allāh ʿalay-hi*).[65] In one place in his *Munāẓarāt*, al-Rāzī, who died in 606/1210, likewise appends al-Masʿūdī's name with the formula, 'may God have mercy upon him' (*raḥimahu llāh*), and in another place he describes his reputation as a scholar in the past tense, both of which points confirm that he died before al-Rāzī's book was written.[66] The book is undated, but is unlikely to be one that al-Rāzī wrote at a very late stage in his life. It seems safe, therefore, to propose the year 600/1204 as the *terminus ante quem* for al-Masʿūdī's death.

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62 Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 2, 652–653.

63 On al-Sanjī, see, for instance, al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabah*, 353. On al-Fāshānī (rather than al-Qāshānī, as in the published editions of Yāqūt's *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*), see al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tabṣīr al-muntabih*, 3, 1148. Sanj and Fāshān are two villages in the vicinity of Marw (al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 7, 165; 9, 225).

64 On the *nisba* al-Zarqī, see al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 6, 267–268.

65 See the description of MS B on p. 172 below.

66 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 39; 31 ('he was a *shaykh* famous for philosophy and skilfulness').

1.3 Al-Masʿūdī's Oeuvre

Al-Masʿūdī's main areas of interest are philosophy, astronomy, astrology, mathematics, logic and jurisprudence, and he has several extant works covering all of these subjects. In what follows, I provide brief details on the known texts, arranged according to subject.

I *General Philosophy*

Al-Masʿūdī is known to have written two general philosophical works, both in Arabic, and both extant.

1. ***Al-Mabāḥith wa-l-shukūk ʿalā kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* (*Investigations and Objections on 'The Pointers and Reminders'*)**, an aporetic commentary on selected passages in Avicenna's *Ishārāt*. The book is discussed in detail in the next chapter, and its extant manuscripts in Chapter 7, which introduces the critical edition. The *Shukūk* is undated, but must have been written before 575/1180, which is the *terminus ante quem* for al-Rāzī's response to this work, the *Jawābāt al-masāʾil al-bukhāriyya*.[67] And as the title of al-Rāzī's response confirms that al-Masʿūdī wrote the *Shukūk* while in Transoxania, the text probably post-dates 549/1154–1155. In short, the *Shukūk* most likely dates to the third quarter of the 6th/12th century. The text contains a reference to Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. before 560/1164–1165) as 'the most excellent person of our time, whom God favoured with a superior [skill for] research and inquiry, the author of the *Muʿtabar*, may God reward his deeds and recompense him well'.[68] This may be read—considering the absence of eulogies similar to those given at the first mention of al-Ghazālī, 'may he be blissful' (*al-saʿīd*) and 'may his soul be sanctified' (*quddisa rūḥu-hu*)—as implying that the *Shukūk* was written in Abū l-Barakāt's lifetime; but this is hardly conclusive evidence.

2. ***Sharḥ al-Khuṭba al-gharrāʾ* (*Commentary on 'The Exalted Homily'*)**. A medium-sized commentary on a very short text by Avicenna on philosophical theology and cosmogony.[69] Unlike the *Shukūk*, this is a full, sentence-by-sentence exegetical commentary on the main text, in which Avicenna's text

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67 Shihadeh, 'Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Response', 2–3.

68 *Shukūk*, 215.

69 For an edition of Avicenna's *al-Khuṭba al-gharrāʾ*, which is also known by the titles *Khuṭbat al-tamjīd*, *al-Khuṭba al-tawḥīdiyya* and *al-Khuṭba al-ilāhiyya*, see Akhtar, 'A Tract of Avicenna'. On this text and its manuscript copies, see Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 509.

is introduced by 'the Shaykh says', followed by 'interpretation' (*al-sharḥ*). Like the *Shukūk*, this composition is undated, but can be dated with confidence to the third quarter of the 6th/12th century. For in the *Sharḥ*, al-Masʿūdī cites his astronomical work *al-Kifāya fī ʿilm al-hayʾa*, which, as we shall see, he was in the process of writing in 549/1154–1155.[70] And the *Sharḥ* itself is referred to—simply as al-Masʿūdī's 'homily' (*khuṭabu-hu*)—in al-Rāzī's *Jawābāt*, completed before 575/1180.[71] There is no evidence, however, to establish the relative dating of the *Sharḥ* and the *Shukūk*. As previously mentioned, the *Sharḥ* appears to be dedicated to Tāj al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm, a vizier or official of the Qarākhānids in Samarqand.[72] The work is transmitted in several manuscript copies.[73]

In the preface to the *Sharḥ*, al-Masʿūdī writes that despite its terseness, Avicenna's *Khuṭba* is rich in philosophical profundities and hence deserves a devoted commentary.[74] Asking God to guide him to the truth, he seeks 'refuge in Him from the sway of the faculty of anger (*al-quwwa al-ghaḍabiyya*), and from appealing to prejudice and partisanship (*al-mayl wa-l-ʿaṣabiyya*)'.[75] He adds the following curious disclaimer:

> We should now proceed with our commentary on the *Khuṭba*. However, it should be known from the outset that the present commentary is written in keeping with the methods, principles, core foundations, and demonstrations of philosophy (*innamā huwa ʿalā manāhij al-ḥikma wa-qawānīni-hā wa-qawāʿid madhāhibi-hā wa-barāhīni-hā*). Yet not all that my tongue utters and that is set forth in my exposition concurs with what I believe in my heart. We seek refuge in God from harbouring any beliefs contrary to religion (*sharīʿa*), and from following anything other than its straight path.[76]

70 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, f. 53ᵇ.

71 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 48; cf. Shihadeh, 'Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Response', 7.

72 See pp. 16–17 above.

73 I have been able to verify the following copies: MS Istanbul, Bağdatlı Vehbi 834 (the copy cited in the present study); MS Istanbul, H. Hüsnü Paşa 1243, ff. 1ᵃ–58ᵃ; MS Istanbul, Ayasofya 4855, ff. 211ᵃ–289ᵃ; MS Cairo, al-Azhar, *khuṣūṣī* 275, *ʿumūmī* 8171; MS Cairo, al-Azhar, *khuṣūṣī* 112, *ʿumūmī* 34260 (which seems to descend from the previous copy); MS Najaf, Gharawiyya, unknown number.

74 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 1ᵇ–2ᵃ.

75 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, f. 2ᵃ. We return to these themes in the next section.

76 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 2ᵃ⁻ᵇ.

So, unlike the *Shukūk*, the commentary on the *Khuṭba* is entirely expository and never critical. We shall return to the points raised in the preface to the commentary in Section 1.4 below, where some of the text's contents are examined.

II *The Sciences*

Al-Masʿūdī also wrote on the sciences, particularly astronomy, astrology, meteorology and mathematics. The mathematician Kamāl al-Dīn al-Fārisī (d. ca. 720/1320) credits 'Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī' with making significant advances in algebra, but he may be confusing him with the mathematician Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (late 11th–early 12th c.), as al-Masʿūdī's only surviving work on the subject shows no evidence of these advances.[77]

3. *Al-Kifāya fī ʿilm al-hayʾa* (*The Compendium of Cosmography*).[78] Written in Arabic, the *Kifāya* consists of two parts, one on astronomy, and the other on geography.[79] Al-Masʿūdī states in the course of one astronomical discussion that he was in the process of writing the book in 549/1150, the earliest dateable point in his life.[80] It is most likely that he completed the text in the same year. Soon afterwards, he produced a Persian translation titled ***Jahān-i dānish***, which is undated.[81] The following is the substantive part of the author's preface to the *Kifāya*—not transmitted in *Jahān-i dānish*—where he provides information on the organisation and sources of his book. Referring to a friend of his, al-Masʿūdī writes:

77 See p. 24 below. Al-Fārisī is quoted by Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Kāshī (d. 833/1429) (*Miftāḥ al-ḥisāb*, 198–199; cf. Rashed, *Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī*, xxxii–xxxiii [French introduction] and xxvii [Arabic introduction], where al-Fārisī's still-unpublished *Usus al-qawāʿid* is cited). On al-Ṭūsī, see, for instance, the introduction of the latter source. On the confusion between him and al-Masʿūdī, see Āl Dāwūd, '*Jahān-i dānish*'.

78 This is the title given in the preface and in *Jahān-i dānish* (p. 1). In *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba al-gharrāʾ* (f. 53^{b}), he refers to it as *al-Kifāya fī hayʾat al-ʿālam*.

79 I am aware of two extant copies of this book: MS Istanbul, Hafid Efendi 154, ff. 107^{b}–149^{a}, and MS Medina, ʿĀrif Ḥikmat 9 *Falak* (Kaḥḥāla, *Muntakhab*, 895).

80 Al-Masʿūdī, *Kifāya*, f. 114^{b}: '… in the year in which this manual is being written, which is the year 549 of the Hijra, or 523 in the Persian calendar', i.e. in the Yazdigird era (on which, see 'Taʾrīkh', *EI3*).

81 The date given in the *Kifāya* is simply translated in *Jahān-i dānish* (44–45). The latter is mentioned in *ʿAnāṣir wa kāʾināt al-jaww*, which was completed in 550/1155–1156. So it is possible that al-Masʿūdī produced the Persian translation of the *Kifāya* immediately after completing the Arabic original. *Jahān-i dānish* survives in numerous manuscript copies, and clearly had much wider circulation than the Arabic original.

> Since this friend's traversing the paths of investigation has led him to the study of cosmography, he sought my advice to select one of the manuals written on the subject. I suggested the book of Abū ʿAlī ibn al-Haytham, and [al-Kharaqī's two books] *Muntahā al-idrāk fī taqāsīm al-aflāk* and *Kitāb al-Tabṣira*. His own view, however, was that I should compose for him, by collating the manuals just mentioned, a compendium (*mukhtaṣar*) of approximately the same length and exactly the same organisation as the *Tabṣira*. He implored me to do so, but I declined and tried to be excused [from the task], as I knew that the *Tabṣira* was unsurpassable in its excellence and perfection and that whoever desired to match it had desired an impossible thing. My friend, however, pressed on with his pleas, and urged me to agree, and I eventually had no choice but to yield to his request. So I composed the present compendium by excerpting the aforementioned books in accordance with his wish and instruction, and I added to it in some places things that I had retained in my memory from reading books on the subject other than the three mentioned, such as [al-Qaṭṭān al-Marwazī's] *Kayhān*[82] *shinākht*, the works of Abū l-Rayḥān [al-Bīrūnī] and Kūshyār [ibn Labbān al-Jīlī], and others. I have titled it *The Compendium of Cosmography*; for it provides all that students of this subject need [to learn].[83]

Two of the sources mentioned in this passage—namely, al-Kharaqī and al-Qaṭṭān al-Marwazī—were older Marw-based contemporaries of al-Masʿūdī.[84] Given the reverence he holds for both astronomers, it is conceivable that he studied the subject with al-Kharaqī, and hard to imagine him missing the opportunity to study with al-Qaṭṭān. The latter was captured and killed by the Oghuz when they invaded Marw in 548/1153, just months, it seems, before al-Masʿūdī completed the *Kifāya* in the safety of Samarqand.

4. *Risāla dar maʿrifat-i ʿanāṣir wa kāʾināt al-jaww* (*Epistle on Delineating the Elements and Phenomena of the Sky*). Appearing in several manuscripts under the title *Āthār-i ʿulwī* (*Meteorology*), this is a short work in Persian, dated 550/1155–1156.[85] Al-Masʿūdī refers to his astronomical work *Jahān-i dānish*

82 Or, alternatively, *Gayhān*.

83 Al-Masʿūdī, *Kifāya*, f. 107^{b}.

84 On these two figures, see 'Al-Kharaḳī', *EI2*; 'Qaṭṭān al-Marwazī', *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers*. Al-Qaṭṭān was a student of al-Lawkarī.

85 Al-Masʿūdī, *ʿAnāṣir wa kāʾināt al-jaww* (ed. Shafīʿ), 69 (which reads *khamsa* rather than *khamsīn*, an error that also appears in other manuscript copies); (ed. Dānishpazhūh), 110.

twice.[86] The name of the patron to whom the book is dedicated is omitted in the extant manuscript copies (at least the ones used for the published editions), and replaced with 'so-and-so' (*fulān*).[87]

5. ***Majmaʿ al-aḥkām* (*Compendium on* [*Astrological*] *Interrogations*).** Dated 557/1162 and written in Persian, this book is dedicated to the *sulṭān* Abū l-Muẓaffar Masʿūd ibn Qilich Qarākhān, discussed earlier.[88]

6. ***Maqāla fī ḥisāb al-jabr wa-l-muqābala* (*Treatise on Algebra*).** A medium-sized manual on algebra is attributed to Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Masʿūd ibn Muḥammad al-Masʿūdī by Ṭāshköprüzāde (d. 968/1561).[89] A manuscript copy, in 75 folios, of this work appears to be located in Tashkent, but is currently inaccessible to me.[90] According to Roshdi Rashed, who had the opportunity to examine this manuscript, the book is overall an elementary algebraic work devoted mainly to second-degree equations, and contains no biographical information on its author. The incipit states that it consists of a compilation (*intikhāb*) of 'ancient and later' sources.[91]

7. ***Manāfiʿ al-abdān* (*The Preservation of Bodily Health*).** A short work, in Persian, on medicine.[92]

III *Logic*

Al-Masʿūdī is known to have written the following two logical texts, both on modally 'mixed syllogisms'. Only the first is extant. Ibn Ghaylān wrote a re-

86 Al-Masʿūdī, *ʿAnāṣir wa kāʾināt al-jaww* (ed. Shafīʿ), 40; 57; (ed. Dānishpazhūh), 69; 92.

87 Al-Masʿūdī, *ʿAnāṣir wa kāʾināt al-jaww* (ed. Shafīʿ), 36; (ed. Dānishpazhūh), 63.

88 Al-Masʿūdī, *Majmaʿ al-aḥkām*, 101. The date given is 531 in the Persian Yazdigird era.

89 Ṭāshköprüzāde, *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda*, 1, 327; and, following him, Kātib Çelebī, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, 1, 857; and Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, *Abjad al-ʿulūm*, 2, 207.

90 MS Tashkent, Al-Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies 10364. See Farfūr and al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Al-Muntaqā min makhṭūṭāt maʿhad al-Bayrūnī*, 134 (where the title is given as *Maqāla fī l-ḥisāb wa-l-jabr wa-l-muqābala wa-l-handasa*).

91 I am very grateful to Professor Rashed for confirming the authenticity of this copy, and for generously providing me with the incipit and other helpful details. He plans to publish a note on this text. The incipit goes as follows:
هذه مقالة في حساب الجبر والمقابلة انتخبتها لبعض أصدقائي من تصانيف القدماء والمتأخرين، وأوردت فيها من أصول هذه الصناعة ما يقرب إلى الأفهام دون الغوامض البعيدة عن الطباع فيما يتعلق بالمكعبات وأموال الأموال وغيرها، إذ قل ما يحتاج إليها في استخراج المسائل الفقهية والحسابية.

92 MS Istanbul, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1624, ff. 30^{b}–31^{b}; Şeşen, *Fihris*, 2, 383.

sponse to both texts, which survives in a unique, titleless manuscript copy dated 570/1174.[93] The two texts, therefore, were completed prior to this date.

8. ***Risālat al-Mukhtaliṭāt* (*Treatise on Mixed Syllogisms*).**[94] A general manual on mixed syllogisms, complete with tables, meant to serve as an introduction to the study of philosophy.[95] In this work, al-Masʿūdī cites the *Ishārāt* and *Shifāʾ* of Avicenna, the *Baṣāʾir* of Ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī, to whom he refers as a 'critical investigator' (*muḥaqqiq*) and 'al-Qāḍī al-Imām',[96] and the *Taḥṣīl* of Bahmanyār.[97]

9. ***Al-Ajwiba ʿalā l-Tawṭiʾa li-l-takhṭiʾa* (*Responses to 'The Prolegomenon to the Refutation'*).** Ibn Ghaylān refers to a work—now lost—by the title *al-Ajwiba*, in which al-Masʿūdī responds to an unidentified work by Ibn Ghaylān.[98] The latter text is simply referred to as 'my initial treatise' (*risālatī al-ūlā*), which indicates that it was the text that instigated the series of responses.[99] Judging by the discussion, Ibn Ghaylān's initial text appears to be, again, on mixed syllogisms. So I strongly suspect it is the book titled *al-Tawṭiʾa li-l-takhṭiʾa* (*Prolegomenon to the Refutation*), a counter-Avicennan book to which Ibn Ghaylān refers in two of his other works, and which he describes as being 'devoted to revealing the mixed syllogistic forms that [Avicenna] omitted to consider in logic'.[100] Whence the fuller title I have given here to al-Masʿūdī's work.

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93 MS Tehran, Kitābkhāna-yi Majlis-i Shūrā 599, ff. 1ᵃ–35ᵇ. The copy is incomplete at the beginning, but was identified by Dānishpazhūh (introduction to al-Sāwī's *Baṣāʾir*, 61–62). I am grateful to Frank Griffel for providing me with a copy of this manuscript.

94 An apparently unique copy, in approximately 19 folios, survives in a composite manuscript belonging to the personal library of Aṣghar Mahdawī (Tehran). For details of the facsimile edition, see the Bibliography. Neither the title nor the author's name are given in the manuscript, dated 596–597/1200 (the title *al-Qiyāsāt al-ḥamliyya* is in a later hand), but the author was identified as al-Masʿūdī by Dānishpazhūh, though he conflates him with Muḥammad ibn Masʿūd al-Ghaznawī (introduction to al-Sāwī's *Baṣāʾir*, 61–62). The title, *Risālat al-Mukhtaliṭāt*, is given by Ibn Ghaylān (*Response*, e.g. ff. 25ᵃ; 25ᵇ; 26ᵇ; 27ᵃ; 29ᵃ).

95 Al-Masʿūdī, *Mukhtaliṭāt*, 308.

96 Al-Masʿūdī, *Mukhtaliṭāt*, 312; 313; 317; 323; 330; 331.

97 Al-Masʿūdī, *Mukhtaliṭāt*, 314.

98 Ibn Ghaylān, *Response*, ff. 9ᵃ; 25ᵃ; 26ᵃ; 26ᵇ; 27ᵃ; 29ᵃ.

99 Ibn Ghaylān, *Response*, ff. 15ᵇ; 23ᵃ. Ibn Ghaylān is likely to have identified his 'initial treatise' in the introduction to his response, which, as noted, is missing in the only known copy.

100 Ibn Ghaylān, *Tanbīh*, 160; cf. *Ḥudūth*, 11; Shihadeh, 'Post-Ghazālian Critic', 141.

Therefore, the sequence of texts is this. Ibn Ghaylān wrote the *Tawṭiʾa* in response to Avicenna's views on mixed syllogisms. Al-Masʿūdī then wrote a response, *Ajwiba*, to the *Tawṭiʾa*, in which he criticised some of Ibn Ghaylān's views as unsound (*takhṭiʾa*).[101] At some stage, al-Masʿūdī also wrote an independent work on mixed syllogisms, titled *Risālat al-Mukhtaliṭāt*. Finally, Ibn Ghaylān wrote a response in which he addressed al-Masʿūdī's views in both the *Ajwiba* and the *Mukhtaliṭāt*. That al-Masʿūdī wrote a response to the *Tawṭiʾa* should not be taken as evidence that he was defending Avicenna against Ibn Ghaylān—al-Ghazālī, after all, had already pronounced logic as a largely sound discipline, which posed no threat to the teachings of revelation, but to the contrary could be put to their service.

IV *Jurisprudence*

The prevalent contemporary view that al-Masʿūdī followed the Ḥanafī school of law is based on two indicants: the first, an entry in Kātib Çelebī's *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, which attributes a juristic book titled *al-Hādī fī l-furūʿ* to a certain 'Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī … al-Ḥanafī, who died in the year …' (the two instances of the ellipsis mark appear in the Istanbul edition and seem to signify lacunae in the autograph manuscript).[102] However, as I have not come across any other reference to either this book or to a 'Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī al-Ḥanafī', and given the absence of a fuller name and the lacunae in the manuscript copy of Kātib Çelebī's work, we have good reason to exercise caution.[103] The second indicant is that al-Masʿūdī had Raḍī al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī, who happens to be a Ḥanafī, as a student. However, as I mentioned earlier, Raḍī al-Dīn only studied philosophy with him, and indeed his Ḥanafī affiliation did not pose an obstacle to him having a Shāfiʿī studying jurisprudence with him, namely Rukn al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī.[104]

101 Ibn Ghaylān, *Response*, ff. 23[a]; 26[a].

102 Kātib Çelebī, *Kashf al-ẓunūn* (Istanbul ed.), 2, 2026. Fluegel's edition (6, 470) has, 'by Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī al-Ḥanafī', omitting the two ellipsis marks and 'who died in the year'.

103 For extant juristic works authored by a Muḥammad ibn Masʿūd or a Masʿūdī, or whose titles start with '*al-Hādī*', see *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 12, 576; 12, 600; 11, 363–365. A work titled *al-Hādī fī l-furūʿ* was written by Masʿūd ibn Muḥammad ibn Masʿūd al-Nīsābūrī (d. 578/1182–1183), who nonetheless was a Shāfiʿī (listed by Kātib Çelebī immediately following the entry in question; cf. al-Baghdādī, *Hadiyyat al-ʿārifīn*, 2, 429; and *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 11, 363, for extant manuscript copies).

104 See n. 60 above.

As I argued earlier, Sharaf al-Dīn seems to belong to a well-established family of Shāfiʿīs based in Marw;[105] and I have not found a single Masʿūdī from the city, at least in the 5th/11th and 6th/12th centuries, who happens to be a Ḥanafī.[106] In the eleventh discussion in al-Rāzī's *Munāẓarāt*, we are told that al-Masʿūdī held al-Ghazālī's juristic works *Shifāʾ al-ghalīl* and the *Mustaṣfā* in high esteem. Al-Rāzī, himself a Shāfiʿī, lambastes both texts on scholarly grounds.[107] Al-Ghazālī's former book, which treats aspects of juristic analogy, frequently criticises Abū Ḥanīfa and is intended in part as a response to the views of the influential Ḥanafī Abū Zayd al-Dabūsī (d. 430/1039).[108] Had al-Masʿūdī been a member of the Ḥanafī school, he would have been inclined either to attack it, or at least to refrain from praising it so passionately in front of a Shāfiʿī. Therefore, the discussion reported in the *Munāẓarāt* must be one between two Shāfiʿīs.

Yet the most concrete evidence of al-Masʿūdī's expertise in jurisprudence and Shāfiʿī affiliation is the following work, which survives in a unique manuscript copy. It, furthermore, confirms his interest in al-Ghazālī's juristic writings, already suggested in al-Rāzī's report.

10. *Al-Muntakhab al-aṣghar mina l-wasīṭ* (*Abridgement of the Collected Excerpts from 'The Middle Book'*). In the preface, the author explains that he had previously written a work comprising excerpts from al-Ghazālī's important book of substantive law *al-Wasīṭ fī l-madhhab*.[109] Titled *al-Muntakhab li-l-fatāwā ʿan kitāb al-wasīṭ*, the longer work appears to be lost. This abridged, or 'shorter' (*aṣghar*), version is extant in a unique manuscript copy housed at Dār al-Kutub in Cairo, which I have been able to consult.[110] The title page (f. 1[a])

105 See pp. 12–13 above.

106 See, for instance, the entry on the *nisba* 'al-Masʿūdī' in al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 11, 306–310.

107 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 43–47.

108 Al-Ghazālī, *Shifāʾ al-ghalīl*, 9. On account of his aggressive criticism of Abū Ḥanīfa in an earlier juristic work, the *Mankhūl*, al-Ghazālī faced fierce opposition from contemporary Ḥanafīs, some even demanding his execution (see, for instance, Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*, 55; 73–74). The *Shifāʾ* is a sequel to the *Mankhūl*.

109 He writes (f. 1[b]):

فلما تيسر الفراغ بعون الله وحسن توفيقه عن تحرير المنتخب للفتاوى عن كتاب الوسيط للإمام حجة الإسلام قدس الله روحه سألني بعض المحصلين أن أختار له من مسائله ما لا بد من معرفتها وحفظها لمن يتصدى بجواب الفتاوى ... وجمعت هذا المختصر الموسوم بالمنتخب الأصغر حاوياً لأقل ما يحتاج إليه المفتي، واقتصرت فيه على مجرد الأحكام دون العلل والتوجيهات والفروق.

110 MS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, *Fiqh Shāfiʿī* 251 (previously, MS Cairo, Khidīwiyya Library 1765); cf.

gives the author's name as 'al-Imām Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Masʿūd ibn Muḥammad al-Masʿūdī'.

1.4 Theological Commitments

Before turning to al-Masʿūdī's critique of Avicennan philosophy in the *Shukūk*, we should firstly try to gain an initial understanding of his own commitments and motives, specifically whether he engaged in philosophy as a philosopher (much like Abū l-Barakāt), or, to an extent, as a theologian (more like al-Ghazālī in the *Tahāfut*, but without the strident polemic). For sure, there is no evidence that he belonged to any of the established schools of theology, and neither of his two works on philosophy exhibits any of the usual hallmarks of *kalām*; but that would be to understand *kalām* as it is conceived and practised within classical Ashʿarism. What we need to query is whether al-Masʿūdī may have taken his impetus from *kalām* as conceived and practised by al-Ghazālī,[111] which would explain his remarkable openness towards natural philosophy and his comparatively critical stance in his treatment of philosophical metaphysics. Answering this query—at least, at this stage, by forming a hypothesis—will allow us to frame and interpret his critique of Avicennan philosophy in the *Shukūk*; and this makes it imperative that we pursue the task at hand without reference to this critique.

That al-Masʿūdī subscribed to positions that we would describe as theological is readily evident in the manner in which he distances himself, in the preface to *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, from views expressed in the book that do not accord with the teachings of revelation (though he does not specify any of the contents or teachings in question).[112] That he had at least some involvement in *kalām* is evident in his antagonism towards the Ismāʿīlīs, a prime target for al-Ghazālī's combative and tactical *kalām* project. In Section 10 of his *Munāẓarāt*, al-Rāzī reports that in one meeting al-Masʿūdī defended a refutation (*naqḍ*) of the teachings of al-Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ (d. 518/1124), which al-Ghazālī deploys in an unidentified work. Unimpressed with al-Ghazālī's arguments, al-Rāzī discusses one argument with his interlocutor and concludes by giving the following verdict on both al-Ghazālī and al-Masʿūdī:

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al-Mayhī and al-Biblāwī, *Fihrist*, 3, 278; and *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 10, 424. The copy consists of 124 folios, and is undated.

111 As explained in Section 1.1 above.

112 See pp. 21–22 above.

> How very strange you are! You accuse people of sympathy to the enemies of religion. However, what you do not realise is that refuting the specious views of the godless [Ismāʿīlīs] (*mulḥidūn*) using wretched and unconvincing arguments only serves in fact to reinforce their views![113]

So al-Masʿūdī here is characterised as a theologian motivated by the defence of certain religious tenets and the refutation of Ismāʿīlism. However, although this shows that he engages in theological activity against a particular system of belief, it does not immediately follow that he assumes the same stance towards other schools of thought. Opposition to Ismāʿīlism does not imply opposition to philosophy; and in fact the characteristic Ismāʿīlī principle discussed in the section is the charismatic authority of the infallible imām, which was deemed antithetical to both philosophical and theological rationalism.

I *Al-Masʿūdī as portrayed by his contemporaries, Ibn Ghaylān and al-Rāzī*

Although al-Masʿūdī's two known general philosophical works are extant, closer inspection of these works and of contemporaneous sources reveals that the man himself is extremely difficult to pin down. Being commentaries, both texts give away scarce and fleeting glimpses of the commentator's own independent views. We do not seem to be alone, however, in finding ourselves a little puzzled, for there is evidence that even to his contemporaries al-Masʿūdī appeared as a somewhat ambiguous thinker.

To his colleague Ibn Ghaylān al-Balkhī, who quotes the *Shukūk* in his *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, al-Masʿūdī was a *kalām* theologian who, like him, was committed to refuting Avicennan philosophy.[114] In the course of contextualising his own struggle against Avicenna's teachings, Ibn Ghaylān complains that many of his contemporaries had come under their influence and started to incorporate them into their writings.[115] There are, however, important exceptions that buck the trend, as he goes on to explain:

> Not everyone who has read the books of the philosophers, understood their discussions, and pursued[116] their opinions should be suspected of having accepted them as true and abandoned the beliefs upon which

113 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 42.
114 Ibn Ghaylān, *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, 111; 114.
115 Ibn Ghaylān, *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, 7–14.
116 Reading *tafahhama … wa-tatabbaʿa*, rather than *yafhamu … wa-yattabiʿu*, as in the edition.

> he was raised. Such a suspicion (*ẓann*) would be a great blunder and a heinous error: it implies that [the philosophers'] views are so sound and evident that whoever comprehends them will accept them, so it effectively bolsters the philosophers and reinforces their false opinions. The truth is that one who is able to understand their discussions with ease, and studies them perceptively, who is highly talented by nature and capable of distinguishing truth from falsehood in what he reads, who is swift to pick out the errors committed and unapparent fallacies therein, and who moreover is thoroughly learned in the discipline of logic, well-grounded in the discipline of *kalām*, and predisposed to engage in rational subjects—such as the Proof of Islam Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, the venerable Shaykh and Imām Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Masʿūdī, and other *kalām* experts who studied logic and [philosophical] metaphysics only for the purpose just mentioned [that is, refutation]—he should not be subject to this misplaced suspicion.[117]

Two salient points can be drawn out from this passage. To begin with, it reveals that al-Masʿūdī was 'suspected' by some of his contemporaries of being an Avicennist, that is, one of those religious scholars described by Ibn Ghaylān as having bought into Avicennan teachings in metaphysics and natural philosophy and abandoned the teachings of Sunni theology. Second, Ibn Ghaylān counters this suspicion by characterising al-Masʿūdī as a *kalām* theologian—not any type of *kalām* theologian, but one who can aptly be classed with al-Ghazālī. According to this characterisation, al-Masʿūdī would be a *mutakallim* of the Ghazālian type, one who has little time for systematic theology and whose efforts are devoted to the defence of the central creeds of orthodoxy by refuting competing systems of belief, which pose a real and imminent threat in the theologian's time and place (as opposed, for instance, to obsolete heresies).

In contrast to Ibn Ghaylān, al-Rāzī characterises al-Masʿūdī primarily as a philosopher (*faylasūf*), introducing him in the *Munāẓarāt* as 'a *shaykh* famous for philosophy and skilfulness', and telling him at one point that he is 'one of the philosophers (*ḥukamāʾ*)'.[118] In the vein of this characterisation, he identifies Abū l-Barakāt's philosophical work the *Muʿtabar*, in the preface to the *Jawābāt*, as the main source of the *Shukūk*—an association which suggests that al-Masʿūdī pursued a comparable philosophical project.[119] In some cases, how-

117 Ibn Ghaylān, *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, 11.

118 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 31; 37.

119 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 11.

ever, al-Rāzī expresses this characterisation with some irony, as he observes at several points that al-Masʿūdī's views and arguments are more befitting of a *kalām* theologian or a literalist reader (*ẓāhirī*) of Avicenna, than of a philosopher or a critical investigator.[120] Al-Rāzī indeed seems to regard his contemporary's intellectual pedigree as somewhat ambiguous—a point highlighted most notably through the attention given in the *Munāẓarāt* to the influence that al-Ghazālī had on him. This characterisation becomes apparent when his portrayal of al-Masʿūdī in the *Munāẓarāt*, especially in Sections 9 and 10, is studied closely.[121] One salient theme that emerges in this portrayal is that al-Masʿūdī has a highly emotional, above all irascible, character. (Whether or not this is an accurate characterisation is besides the point here.) Al-Rāzī describes his anger (*ghaḍab*), sometimes giving vivid details, no less than eight times in the book: we are told that he becomes 'extremely angry' in discussions, he loses the capacity to think clearly and to speak coherently, his colour changes, his body shakes in anger, he tends to descend to quarrel (*shaghab*) and imbecility (*safāha*), and so forth.[122] On the other hand, in one discussion he is described as being predisposed to excitement: we are told that he became ecstatic (*fī ghāyat al-faraḥ wa-l-surūr*) after purchasing books that he held in high regard, and then after reading a passage from a work by al-Ghazālī.[123] This characterisation may initially seem to be a frivolous attempt on al-Rāzī's behalf to present his interlocutor in the worst possible light, but its significance increases once we consider another salient theme in the *Munāẓarāt*. Al-Masʿūdī himself gives us a vital clue in the preface to his commentary on the *Khuṭba*, where he links the faculty of anger (*al-quwwa al-ghaḍabiyya*) to prejudice and partisanship (*al-mayl wa-l-ʿaṣabiyya*).[124] A similar association is implicit in al-Rāzī's portrayal of

120 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 37; *Jawābāt*, 23; 29; 46; cf. Shihadeh, 'Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Response', 3.

121 Section 11 too centres on al-Masʿūdī's close following of al-Ghazālī (*Munāẓarāt*, 43–47), but addresses the latter's jurisprudential works. Moreover, al-Masʿūdī in that section remains mostly silent, while al-Rāzī effectively delivers a lecture.

122 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 31; 32 (twice, in Sections 8 and 9); 34; 35; 36; 41; 42. In a ninth place, we are told that al-Masʿūdī 'turned red and yellow' (*Munāẓarāt*, 47), probably, in this case, out of a sense of defeat, rather than anger!

123 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 39; 41.

124 See p. 21 above. Taneli Kukkonen has kindly informed me that he is preparing a study to be titled 'Al-Ghazālī on Anger and Spirit', in which he explores the link that al-Ghazālī makes, particularly in *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, between partisanship and an overdeveloped spirited part of the soul. It seems that the link that al-Masʿūdī makes between anger and partisanship is yet further evidence of the deep influence that al-Ghazālī had on him.

al-Masʿūdī: the way he is described in the *Munāẓarāt*, he is quick to anger at his interlocutor's criticism of authority due to his entrenched emotive attachment to certain individuals, texts, doctrines and arguments. Al-Rāzī's clearest reference, in this text, to the aggressive partisan bias that can motivate theological and philosophical enquiry occurs in his assessment of the heresiographical work *al-Farq bayn al-firaq* by the earlier Ashʿarī ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037), on whom he writes: 'This *Ustādh* was extremely biased (*shadīd al-taʿaṣṣub*) against opponents'.[125] (Al-Baghdādī is mentioned as a source for al-Shahrastānī's *al-Milal wa-l-niḥal*, which al-Masʿūdī held in high esteem.)

So, in the course of one discussion, and reacting to al-Masʿūdī's anger, al-Rāzī remonstrates with his interlocutor, explicitly linking dispassion to sound and critical investigation:

> If this discussion is going to be conducted on the basis of quarrel and anger, then we had better end it! But if our purpose is to investigate and to reflect (*al-baḥth wa-l-naẓar*), then this can only be achieved through level-headedness and composure (*al-thabāt wa-l-sukūn*).[126]

Al-Rāzī implies that partisan bias—a motive that, he suggests, underlies some of al-Masʿūdī's thinking—impacts rational investigation in two major ways. The first is that it tends to affect the manner in which one reports and interprets the views of others: due to his bias, we are told, ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī does not report the views of non-Ashʿarīs accurately, al-Ghazālī misreports a certain view of al-Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ, and in one discussion al-Masʿūdī likewise reportedly misrepresents a view of al-Rāzī.[127] In the *Jawābāt* too, al-Masʿūdī is taken to task for basing his critiques of Avicenna in the *Shukūk* on an uncharitable reading of the *Ishārāt*, one that conveniently makes the task of objecting to the target text all the easier.[128] The second impact, which often follows on from the first, is that the desire to champion certain views or sources and to refute others tends to result in uncritical, and hence frequently specious reasoning, a point that comes to the fore in al-Rāzī's complaints against two arguments of al-Ghazālī defended by al-Masʿūdī. The arguments themselves are of little rele-

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125 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 39.

126 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 35.

127 Respectively: al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 39; 42; 34. In the last case, al-Rāzī protests in frustration that al-Masʿūdī fails to grasp the rational (*ʿaqlī*) argument that his interlocutor put forth, but instead imagines (*takhayyala*) it to be a different, much weaker argument.

128 Shihadeh, 'Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Response', 5.

vance to our present purposes, but the bottom line is this. In the first argument, directed against the philosophers, al-Ghazālī refutes a certain philosophical doctrine and concludes his discussion without attempting to identify or to consider evidence that can be adduced in support of the doctrine in question. Al-Rāzī submits that once the relevant evidence is taken into account, al-Ghazālī's treatment is immediately exposed as 'frivolous' (*laysa bi-shayʾ*) and 'extremely weak' (*ḍaʿīf jiddan*).[129] In the second argument, al-Ghazālī misreports a certain position advocated by al-Ṣabbāḥ, and goes on to attack a straw man.[130]

To recap, al-Rāzī describes al-Masʿūdī as a philosopher but also ascribes to him certain traits characteristic of *kalām*, in particular partisan bias and motivation, while Ibn Ghaylān characterises him as a Ghazālī-style *mutakallim* and defends him against the accusation that he was a philosopher. To his contemporaries, therefore, al-Masʿūdī appears to be a rather ambiguous thinker, both in terms of the objectives of his engagement in philosophy, and accordingly of which 'side' he was on. The perception that he had a foot in both camps appears to be reflected in the two earliest manuscript copies of the *Shukūk*, where al-Masʿūdī is given the honorific title, 'the one followed by the two parties' (*muqtadā l-farīqayn*), probably a reference to (traditional Avicennan) philosophers and (counter-Avicennan) theologians.[131]

II *Al-Masʿūdī through His Commentary on Avicenna's* al-Khuṭba al-Gharrāʾ

So we must turn to al-Masʿūdī's own philosophical works, and try to tease out hints of any commitments concerning questions that were subject to contention either between Avicennists and theologians, or among theologians. For the most part in the present section, we shall fix on a selection of discussions

129 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 34–38; cf. al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 41 ff.

130 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 40–42. The view that partisan bias is inconsistent with critical investigation was, of course, widespread. On the emphasis that Avicenna lays on this, see Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 213–220.

131 See the description of MSS A and B on pp. 170–171 below. Traditional Avicennan philosophers and their critics are referred to as 'two parties' (*farīqayn*) by al-Rāzī (*Mabāḥith*, 1, 4; see pp. 3–4 above). I am grateful to Frank Griffel for bringing to my attention that the same title, '*qudwat al-farīqayn*', appears to be given to al-Ghazālī in one or more manuscript copies of his *al-Maḍnūn al-ṣaghīr* (p. 89), also known as *Nafkh al-rūḥ wa-l-taswiya*. The phrase is transmitted only in early editions of the text published in Cairo. Another reading of the title in al-Masʿūdī's case is that the 'two parties' are Shāfiʿīs and Ḥanafīs; however, a reference to schools of law seems out of place in the incipit of a philosophical work.

in the commentary on Avicenna's *al-Khuṭba al-gharrāʾ*, and shall refer to the *Shukūk* sparingly, and only on the rare occasions where a theological point is stated explicitly.

Before we begin to interpret *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, we must first revisit the two provisos expressed in the preface. The first is that the commentator eschews 'prejudice and partisanship', which effectively indicates that he interprets Avicenna's text neutrally and entirely on Avicenna's terms, and thus refrains from raising objections to his views or arguments. His commentary, as he states, 'is written in keeping with the methods, principles, core foundations, and demonstrations of [Avicennan] philosophy'. The second proviso, following on from the first, is that some contents of the commentary do not correspond to the commentator's views, since his objective is only to expound Avicennan philosophy. In most cases, therefore, it is impossible, on the basis of the text alone, to identify views that al-Masʿūdī does accept from those that he does not. We can look for clues in subtle nuances in the text. For instance, in some discussions, he reports the philosophers' views and introduces them by, 'they say' (*qālū*, *yaqūlūna*, *dhakarū*), which suggests that the commentator intends to distance himself somewhat from the views in question. And in a small number of discussions, he seems to defend certain Avicennan views as concurring with the teachings of revelation, along lines that we do not encounter in Avicennan texts, which suggests genuine eagerness to champion these views. Neither, however, is a reliable criterion for ascertaining the author's own commitments; for at least one discussion is interspersed with the expression 'they say', but all the same, concludes with the type of defence just described.

With this constraint in mind, we may now turn to our selection of discussions. The problems are predominantly of philosophical theology, and in what follows are arranged thematically.

1. God's attributes and simplicity. In the *Sharḥ*, al-Masʿūdī expounds a thoroughly Avicennan theory of God's nature emphasising his absolute oneness and simplicity. We are told that God 'has no essence over and above His existence'; for if an entity possesses an essence, existence would be accidental to its essence and hence caused, and it is impossible for God's existence to be caused.[132] The commentator also explains that since God is absolutely one, and thus cannot have a multiplicity of aspects (*jiha*, *ḥaythiyya*) to His nature, it is

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132 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 15^{a-b}. On Avicenna's conception of God's uniqueness and simplicity, see Adamson, 'From the Necessary Existent to God', 177 ff.

impossible for any attribute, generated or pre-eternal, to be superadded to His being and to subsist in Him.[133]

This conception of divine simplicity underpins al-Masʿūdī's commentary on the divine names invoked by Avicenna at the beginning of his homily. The commentator explains that a word can refer to a thing in one of six ways: either (1) the word signifies fully the essence of the thing (e.g. 'human' when said of Zayd); (2) the word signifies the essence, not wholly but in part (e.g. 'animal' when said of Zayd); (3) the word signifies, not the essence of the thing, but an accident inhering in it (e.g. 'white' when said of Zayd); (4) the word signifies an accident, which inheres in the thing, but has a connection to a different thing (e.g. 'knower' when said of Zayd, as it requires an object of knowledge); (5) the word signifies a relative attribute (*ṣifa iḍāfiyya*) of the thing (e.g. 'generous' when said of Zayd, on account of acts related to him); or (6) the word signifies a negation, or privation, characteristic of the thing (e.g. 'needy' when said of Zayd, on account of his lack of wealth).[134] The commentary then submits that the names of God can only be of the first, fifth or sixth types, since none of these presupposes multiplicity in His nature, whereas the second, third and fourth types do. In other words, divine names either refer to the reality of God in its fullness—that is, His necessary existence—or denote relations between God and other things, of which He is their ultimate cause, or denote negative attributes.[135] Al-Masʿūdī writes:

> In a nutshell (*ʿalā l-jumla*), research and investigation reveal that all of the names and attributes of God, exalted, refer either [1] to His essence[136] (*dhāt*) (such as 'God', 'Living', 'Self-subsisting' [*al-Qayyūm*], 'All-Knowing', 'All-Hearing', 'All-Seeing', and the like), though some of these are likely combined of the first and sixth types, or [2] to acts related to His essence (such as 'Producer', 'Creator', 'Sustainer', 'Merciful', 'Compassionate', and the like), or [3] to things negated with respect to His essence (such as 'One', 'Self-Sufficient', and the like).[137]

133 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 14^b–15^a; cf. f. 38^b.

134 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 2^b–3^b; cf. Avicenna, *Manṭiq*, I.I.5, 28 ff. Al-Masʿūdī goes on to explain how four divine names mentioned at the beginning of Avicenna's text can be interpreted along these lines (ff. 3^b–5^a).

135 On Avicenna's account of 'positive' and 'negative' divine attributes, see *Ilāhiyyāt*, VIII.4–5, 343–354; cf. Adamson, 'From the Necessary Existent to God'.

136 Which, of course, is none other than His existence.

137 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 4^b–5^a.

A detailed exposition (*tafṣīl*) of these names, he adds, goes beyond the book's scope and should be sought in more extensive works on 'the higher science' (*al-ʿilm al-aʿlā*), by which he means metaphysics, more specifically philosophical theology.

In the *Shukūk*, however, al-Masʿūdī appears to champion a different conception of God's nature, as he raises a doubt concerning the notion that 'the Necessary of Existence is one in all respects and contains no multiplicity whatsoever'. He contends that even though the existence of an uncaused cause, which is necessary of existence, can be established,

> … what is beyond that—namely, His reality being necessary existence,[138] or His reality being necessary existence that is unconnected to an essence, or in which no attribute can possibly subsist—none of this follows from that [i.e. from proving the Necessary of Existence]. *There is in fact no evidence for this at all.* Moreover, it is not impossible that the essence (*dhāt*) of the First be necessary, and that His attributes too—including knowledge, power, will and all other [attributes] that He can possibly have—be necessary and not dependent on a cause, such that they have always been existent with the essence without being caused, just as the essence itself is uncaused. The existence of existents would accordingly proceed from Him through the pre-eternal will subsisting in the essence.[139]

This is al-Masʿūdī's final word on the question of divine simplicity and attributes in the *Shukūk*, and it accords unmistakably with the Ashʿarī theory that certain attributes are distinct from, and subsist in, God's essence. Classical Ashʿarīs recognise seven such attributes—namely, life, knowledge, will, power, sight, hearing and speaking—and consider them to be pre-eternal and uncaused. They contend that though divine will is pre-eternal, it can produce things in time without itself undergoing change.[140] Al-Masʿūdī proposes this conception of God's attributes as one that, in his view, Avicenna fails to exclude, but he does not attempt to defend it any further. Nonetheless, it may betray an underlying commitment of his.

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138 The text reads rather awkwardly here: '*kawni-hi ḥaqīqat wujūb al-wujūd*' literally means 'His being the reality of necessary existence'.

139 *Shukūk*, 275–276.

140 See, for instance, al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 102 ff.

2. Cosmogony. Commenting on Avicenna's statement, 'He acts only by way of atemporal creation (*lā yafʿalu illā ibdāʿan*)', al-Masʿūdī remarks that 'this is based on one of the principal doctrines (*aṣl kabīr*) of the philosophers'.[141] An act (*fiʿl*) is produced by its agent, he explains along Avicennan lines, either voluntarily or through a process of involuntary overflowing (*fayaḍān*); and the latter can be either a natural occurrence, if the agent lacks knowledge of its effect, or an act of munificence (*jūd*), if the agent knows its effect. God's acts proceed from Him by way of munificence, and not voluntarily, since voluntary action must be motivated by some need, or imperfection, which the agent seeks to fulfil, whereas God is self-sufficient and perfect. And since His action is involuntary, but proceeds from, and by virtue of, His being, it cannot have a beginning in time, as that would entail that God undergoes change, which is impossible on account of His absolute simplicity.[142] Al-Masʿūdī goes on to summarise Avicenna's refutation of the doctrine of temporal creation, introducing it as follows:

> They also substantiate this view [that is, atemporal creation] in a different way, which is [this]: they lay down their doctrine that God, exalted, never produces an act out of a voluntary end, and they grant, for the sake of argument (*musāmaḥatan*), rather than as a genuine conviction, that it is possible for Him, exalted, to act by way of choice and [voluntary] intention. [From this,] however, they then argue: If we postulate that He, exalted, existed while His act (that is, the world) did not exist, it will be impossible for it to exist subsequently ...[143]

He then summarises the ensuing *reductio ad absurdum*, by which Avicenna refutes the doctrines that God acts voluntarily and hence that the world came to be in time.[144] It is noteworthy in the passage just quoted and elsewhere in this discussion that the Avicennan views and dialectical tactics are reported second-hand, and not explicitly endorsed.

Notwithstanding, and aware of the controversy surrounding the theory of the pre-eternity of the world, al-Masʿūdī goes on to make the following case in defence:

141 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, f. 25b.

142 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 25b–27a; cf. Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IX.1, 379–381.

143 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, f. 27b.

144 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 27b–29a.

> Let it not occur to you that this amounts to asserting that the world is pre-eternal and denying that it is generated. Not at all! For that would be contrary to religion and [true] belief—God forbid (*ḥāshā*) that philosophy come into conflict with the true [teachings of] revelation! However, the agreement (*muwāfaqa*) between revealed discourses (*al-khiṭābāt al-sharʿiyya*) and philosophical investigations can only be recognised by one who is assisted by God, exalted, and who has strived his utmost to acquire them, until he attained the optimum in both. Quite often [you find] a perfect scholar of religion, who nonetheless has no learning in philosophy, or an expert in philosophy, but whose soul nonetheless has not been elevated (*tasharrafa*) by religious learning! Neither would recognise the agreement between the two in detail (*maʿrifa juzʾiyya*), though they may recognise it in general terms.[145]

This passage is one of the hardest to interpret in the commentary on the *Khuṭba*, as al-Masʿūdī here departs from the standard 'script' of offering a neutral account of Avicennan philosophy, and goes to the trouble of defending the philosopher's doctrine of atemporal creation. However, it is impossible to tell whether this heartfelt defence attests that al-Masʿūdī genuinely champions this doctrine, or is simply an aspect of the commentator's aim of presenting Avicennan philosophy in a positive light. As we shall see in the next chapter, the doctrine of the pre-eternity of the world is one that al-Masʿūdī appears to oppose in the *Shukūk*.

The discussion following the passage just cited explains that Avicenna's cosmogony should not be read as amounting to an affirmation of the pre-eternity of the world. The pair of expressions '*muḥdath*' and '*qadīm*', he writes, can have three senses. The first is 'new' and 'old', which are clearly irrelevant. The second is 'temporally generated' (*muḥdath zamānī*), i.e. a thing whose existence is preceded by time, and 'infinite in the past' (*qadīm zamānī*), i.e. a thing whose existence is not preceded by time. In this sense, one can state that time and certain parts of the world, in particular the celestial spheres, are pre-eternal, but not that the world as such is pre-eternal, since many parts of the world, 'such as animals, plants, etc.', come to be in time and are not pre-eternal. Such a view, al-Masʿūdī opines, does not contradict revelation, 'for revelation never contradicts reality; revelation never states that black is not a colour, or that the human being is not an animal'.[146] Although this

145 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, f. 29[a].

146 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, f. 30[b].

assessment of revelation is meant as a defence of an Avicennan doctrine, it does not itself draw on Avicenna's theory of prophecy, according to which the theological contents of scripture contain only a modicum of truth, and consist largely of images that have little or no correspondence to reality, but serve to motivate ordinary people to abide by the Law.[147] Al-Masʿūdī's assertion that 'revelation never contradicts reality' accords instead with the dominant *kalām* position on the epistemic status of scripture, according to which knowledge of reality is attained principally through reason, and if any contents of scripture appear to contradict reality the theologian must resort to figurative interpretation (*taʾwīl*) to resolve what will be deemed to be a *prima facie* contradiction. That said, we are not told exactly how Avicenna's denial of the notion that God created the world voluntarily and in time can be reconciled with revealed statements adduced to corroborate this conception of creation.

The third sense of '*muḥdath*' and '*qadīm*' is 'generated on account of its essence' (*muḥdath dhātī*, *muḥdath bi-l-dhāt*), i.e. a thing whose existence is essentially posterior to another, and 'non-generated on account of its essence' (*qadīm dhātī*, *qadīm bi-l-dhāt*), i.e. a thing whose existence is not posterior to another.[148] In this sense, only God is not posterior to anything (*qadīm*); and to assert that the world too is *qadīm* 'would be contrary to both revelation and reason'. Al-Masʿūdī concludes:

> You have come to know [1] the meanings of '*muḥdath*' and '*qadīm*', and [2] that what all revelations agree upon—namely, that the world is generated and not non-generated—is confirmed by philosophy, and cannot be denied by any philosopher, and [3] that temporal generation, which the mind unambiguously negates with respect to time and some parts of the world, is something that revelation does not contradict, and [4] that it is inconceivable for two sound-minded and impartial individuals to be in substantive (*maʿnawī*) disagreement over this question, though [they may have] a linguistic (*lafẓī*) [disagreement].[149]

Revelation, accordingly, agrees with philosophy in that it teaches that the world is generated, not in the second sense of being created in time in its entirety,

147 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, X.2. 441–443; cf. Michot, *La destinée de l'homme*, 30 ff.

148 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 29ᵃ–31ᵃ. Essential priority and posteriority are introduced earlier in the work (ff. 18ᵃ–19ᵇ); cf. Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.1, 163 ff.

149 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, f. 31ᵃ.

but in the third sense. The text, however, does not elaborate on this reading of scriptural cosmogony.[150]

A little later in his commentary, al-Masʿūdī turns to another 'one of the principal doctrines of the philosophers', this time the Avicennan principle that from a cause that is absolutely one, only one effect can derive (*al-shayʾ al-wāḥid lā yaṣduru ʿan-hu illā shayʾ wāḥid*).[151] This principle has various applications in Avicenna's philosophy, chief among which being his version of the Neoplatonic account of the procession of multiple existents from the One.[152] Avicenna argues that being an absolutely simple efficient cause, the First Cause only produces a single effect, namely the First Intellect, whose coming-to-be ushers the first instance of multiplicity. Al-Masʿūdī reports in second-hand fashion how Avicenna's premise is substantiated. The principle, we are told, is evident and in need of no proof; however, a reminder (*tanbīh*) is offered for the benefit of those who do not readily assent to it.[153] This is followed by an account of Avicenna's broader theory of emanation, which explains the coming-to-be of multiplicity out of an absolutely simple Cause.[154] No reference is made, however, to the theological complaints raised against this conception of God's activity; what is more, at the end of the discussion this conception is said to be confirmed by the Prophetic tradition, 'The first thing that God created was the intellect'.[155] In the *Shukūk*, by contrast, the doctrine that from one only one effect proceeds is criticised in a dedicated discussion (Section 11).[156]

3. God can be seen. Commenting on Avicenna's statement, 'Vision cannot perceive Him', al-Masʿūdī goes on to examine the nature of sense perception and the workings of the internal and external senses, concluding that none of these senses has the ability to perceive God.[157] The discussion, nonetheless, is

150 Of course, as several medieval commentators pointed out, the Qurʾān nowhere states that the world is created *ex nihilo*. Yet one always expects a reading such as the one advanced in the *Sharḥ* to be supported with evidence, given its radical departure from the standard theological position.

151 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 41^{a-b}.

152 On this principle, see pp. 74–75 below.

153 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 41^{b}–42^{b}.

154 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 41^{a}–50^{b}.

155 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, f. 50^{b}. The *ḥadīth* is widely regarded as unsound among traditionists (for an extended discussion, see al-Zabīdī, *Itḥāf*, 1, 453–455).

156 *Shukūk*, 275–278.

157 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 5^{a}–10^{a}. Avicenna here paraphrases Q. 6.103.

appended with the following remark, the only reference made in the book to either al-Ghazālī or a theological source:

> Do not think, however, that this negates that God, exalted, can be seen. The correct doctrine (*al-madhhab al-ḥaqq*) is that God, exalted, may be seen, but cannot be perceived through vision. The reality of 'seeing' (*ruʾya*) is different from the reality of 'perception through vision'. As to what that reality is, and how it can be affirmed while negating perception through vision, this is not the right place to explain it. Whoever desires to know this should seek it in *al-Iqtiṣād fī l-iʿtiqād* by al-Imām al-Ghazālī, the Proof of Islam, may his noble soul be sanctified.[158]

The position that al-Ghazālī defends in the *Iqtiṣād*, mainly against the Muʿtazila and secondarily against the anthropomorphists, is the standard Ashʿarī doctrine that God can be seen without Him being in any way corporeal.[159] In the course of his discussion, he briefly explains his conception of seeing God in the Sufi-inspired terms of witnessing (*mushāhada*) and unveiling (*kashf*).[160] What transpires from the above passage—specifically, the reference to the *Iqtiṣād* and the characterisation of the Ashʿarī doctrine as '*al-madhhab al-ḥaqq*'—is that al-Masʿūdī genuinely subscribes to this doctrine. It seems that he permits himself here to slot in his passing endorsement of this non-Avicennan theological doctrine because it does not clash, at least in any direct and obvious way, with Avicennan doctrines.

4. Atomism. As expected, al-Masʿūdī's commentary on the *Khuṭba* offers a perfectly Avicennan brand of hylomorphism. For instance, we are told that body consists of the combination of two things: matter, which is pure potentiality, and corporeal form (*ṣūra jismiyya*), which provides matter with actuality and three-dimensional continuity.[161] A species form is produced by the Active Intellect as soon as a material substrate acquires the preparedness (*istiʿdād*) to receive it.[162] And so forth. In the *Shukūk*, by contrast, the theory of corporeal form is criticised, as we shall see in Chapter 6.

158 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 10^{a-b}.

159 Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 60–73.

160 Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 67–69. For a discussion of al-Ghazālī's position, see Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge*, 48 ff.

161 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 12^{b}–13^{b}.

162 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 4^{b}; 54^{b}–55^{a}.

In one discussion in the commentary on the *Khuṭba*, al-Masʿūdī appears to reveal a genuine commitment to hylomorphism. He writes that 'some people'—by whom he clearly intends the theologians—reject the view that body is infinitely divisible in favour of the theory of the indivisible part, and he adds that there are 'numerous proofs' to affirm the former view and to refute the latter. Summarising one such proof, which he borrows from Avicenna,[163] he remarks:

> What the rejectors [of the theory that matter is infinitely divisible] adduce are weak and flimsy statements that boil down to mere condemnations [of ideas] as doubtful or [intellectually] offensive, none of which [condemnations] reach the level of persuasiveness, not to mention demonstrativeness. A friend once asked me in the past to work out something that could be relied upon in defending their doctrine, [i.e. atomism], so I did that and developed [a proof] starting from true geometrical premises.[164]

The argument devised by al-Masʿūdī, which is of little relevance to our present purposes, is a version, articulated in geometrical terms, of the earlier *kalām* argument that when a sphere is in contact with a flat surface, the point of contact between the two must be indivisible, from which it may be inferred that the point of contact is an indivisible atom.[165] Al-Masʿūdī, however, immediately goes on to confute the proof, arguing that even though the point of contact is indivisible, it cannot consist of an indivisible particle.[166] The autobiographical element in the passage unambiguously attests al-Masʿūdī's opposition to atomism and commitment to hylomorphism.

5. Eschatology. The concluding discussion in *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, on 'the conditions of the soul after death', explains Avicenna's position on the happiness or suffering that human souls experience after the death of the body according to their degree of perfection or imperfection. One rank of human souls includes those that had already become intellectually perfected, but are immersed in

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163 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 59[b]–60[a]; cf. Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.4, 282–284; cf. McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 75–76.

164 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, f. 60[a].

165 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 60[a]–61[a]; cf. al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat al-aqdām*, 507 (where a simpler version of the argument is attributed to al-Juwaynī).

166 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 61[a–b].

bodily pleasures; these souls will suffer greatly after they become separated from their bodies. However, because a soul's attraction to the body is an accidental disposition, its suffering will after a while come to an end, and it will then become happy by virtue of the perfection it had achieved. 'For this reason', al-Masʿūdī remarks, 'Sunnīs do not hold that believers who commit major sins will spend an eternity (*khulūd*)' in hell.[167] Of course, this Sunnī doctrine—the antithesis of Khārijī and Muʿtazilī doctrines that condemn the committer of a major sin to everlasting punishment in hell—was based, not on rational grounds, as suggested here, but on scriptural evidence (e.g. Q. 4.48).[168] Al-Masʿūdī's observation seems to be a further small attempt to reconcile an Avicennan theory with Sunnī theology.

In conclusion, despite the clues as to the commentator's commitments and motives, which the commentary on the *Khuṭba* provides us, all in all the picture it paints is, once again, inconclusive. It is impossible to tell on the basis of the text alone which Avicennan views hold good for the commentator. What is clear, however, is that theology was at the back of al-Masʿūdī's mind: he is aware of the points of conflict between philosophers and theologians, and he occasionally attempts to allude to, or to incorporate, theological doctrines. On the balance of the evidence, it appears that these doctrines are overall associated with Ashʿarism. Al-Masʿūdī, of course, was a Shāfiʿī and heavily influenced by al-Ghazālī; so it is unsurprising that his philosophical works should exhibit the influence of Ashʿarī teachings.

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167 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 69^{a-b}.

168 For instance, al-Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 385–389.

CHAPTER 2

The *Shukūk*: Aporetic Commentary

In the following chapters, we conduct four case studies in which the contents of five sections of the *Shukūk* are closely examined. Here in the present chapter, we offer an overview of the organisation and contents of al-Masʿūdī's work, and a reading of the broader motives and method that underlie the book, partly by drawing on some of the findings of the ensuing chapters.

2.1 Two Genres: Aporetic Commentary (*Shukūk*), Exegetical Commentary (*Sharḥ*)

The broader intellectual context within which al-Masʿūdī operated, comprising exponents and critics of Avicennan philosophy, has already been explored at the outset of our previous chapter; and that is certainly the most important background against which the *Shukūk* must be interpreted. As we shall see in detail in what follows, al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut* and Abū l-Barakāt's *Muʿtabar* are the only sources explicitly referenced in the book, alongside the *Ishārāt* (and in one place Euclid). Besides these intellectual trends and sources, we must also consider the textual genealogy of al-Masʿūdī's work, in particular where it is positioned in relation to two distinct commentarial traditions, namely the genre of philosophical and scientific aporetic commentaries and the tradition of exegetical commentaries dedicated to individual Avicennan philosophical texts.[1]

1 My proposed distinction between aporetic and exegetical commentaries differs from Robert Wisnovsky's distinction between 'problem commentaries' and 'system commentaries' ('Avicennism and Exegetical Practice'; 'Avicenna's Islamic Reception', 198–199); the former distinction focuses on the function of a commentary, whereas the latter focuses primarily on scope. Wisnovsky classes al-Rāzī's response to the *Shukūk*, the *Jawābāt*, and Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī's response to al-Rāzī's comprehensive commentary on the *Ishārāt*, *Kashf al-tamwīhāt*, as problem commentaries, whereas I class them as exegetical commentaries, as I shall explain shortly. It should be noted here that the distinction between aporetic and exegetical commentaries is meant not as an exhaustive taxonomy, but first and foremost to delineate aporetic texts as a discrete genre. The distinction seems to become less applicable in post-thirteenth-century Arabic philosophy.

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1. The tradition of aporetic commentaries (*shukūk*). Al-Masʿūdī originally conceived his book within the genre of aporias, which had already become a small, but well-established specialist genre in Arabic science and philosophy.[2] The two most important earlier representative texts, originating respectively from the early fourth/tenth and early fifth/eleventh centuries, are Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's *al-Shukūk ʿalā kalām fāḍil al-aṭibbāʾ Jālīnūs fī l-kutub allatī nusibat ilay-hi* (*Problems Raised Concerning Views of Galen, the Most Eminent of Physicians, in the Books Attributed to Him*) and Ibn al-Haytham's aporias on Ptolemy, *al-Shukūk ʿalā Baṭlamyūs*.[3] Al-Masʿūdī is very likely to have been familiar with the latter book, in view of his interest in the mathematical sciences, especially astronomy. In the preface to his astronomical work the *Kifāya*, he names Ibn al-Haytham's highly influential book *Hayʾat al-ʿālam* as one of his principal sources, and later on in the same work cites his treatise on 'winding motion' (*ḥarakat al-iltifāf*).[4]

So how do aporetic texts differ from refutations, which may be marked by a variety of labels, such as *ibṭāl*, *radd* and *naqḍ*, depending on discipline and context? To answer this question, I propose that the expression *shakk* (pl. *shukūk*) denotes a problem, or objection, that tends to be relatively narrow in scope and limited in its implications. The import of the expression, accordingly, depends on whether an author employs it with reference to objections that he himself raises, or to objections raised against views which he supports.

The former sense gives us dedicated aporetic works, which typically consist of collections of problems, or puzzles, that the author raises concerning views, mostly of a theoretical nature, propounded by an eminent individual in one or more of his works. The target individual and his works will always be responsible for laying the foundations of a major system within a certain field of scholarship, and will therefore have an authoritative status in that field. The author of the aporetic text is normally an insider to the field, but one who nonetheless is more or less unsatisfied with the authoritative system in question. Being

2 We shall confine the present discussion to this genre. Outside the genre, aporias played a central role in ancient and medieval-Arabic philosophy, which is of little relevance to our present purposes. For a broader discussion of aporias, see Rescher, *Aporetics*.

3 For a summary of the contents of Ibn al-Haytham's work, see Saliba, 'Arabic Planetary Theories', 75 ff.

4 See p. 23 above; al-Masʿūdī, *Kifāya*, f. 124^{b}; cf. *Jahān-i dānish*, 75–76. Ibn al-Haytham's treatise on winding motion is lost. He also wrote another work on the subject, in which he responded to problems raised by a contemporary against certain views of Ptolemy (published as *Ḥall shukūk ḥarakat al-iltifāf*). On these works, see Sabra, 'Configuring the Universe', 298 ff.; Rashed, 'Celestial Kinematics', 9 ff.

an insider, the author critiques the target system with a degree of precision—hence the appropriateness of the term *shakk*—and does not launch a sweeping attack that would threaten to demolish the field altogether.[5] So he identifies problems and collates them in a dedicated work, which is then presented as a critique of the system as represented by the target sources. The objections can be minor, but they are often major and query fundamental theoretical principles of the system criticised. In some cases, the objector is motivated to raise his objections out of opposition to the views criticised, or to the broader system if the views in question are major or core components thereof. However, the problems raised can also be open-ended puzzles that are genuinely highlighted as being in need of resolution.

According to Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, objections can be addressed in either of two ways—this, he tells us, is how Galen, had he been alive, would have dealt with al-Rāzī's objections.[6] The first is to advance a solution (*ḥall*) to the problem, which may refine the target system making it more robust and fortified than before. The second possible outcome is for the exponent of the target view to abandon (*rajaʿa ʿan*) it, presumably in favour of a different view altogether. To this, we may add that a solution to the objection can be achieved in two ways: it can interpret the target text or view and thereby expose the objection as specious or off the mark, or it can resolve the problem by proposing an emendation or a supplement to the target system, without having to relinquish any of its defining premises.

As I have already suggested, the expression '*shakk*' implies narrowness in the scope and implications of a criticism, and that when used to refer to the author's own arguments it accordingly implies that they are precise and made from an insider's perspective. In contrast, when used to designate objections raised by adversaries against views championed by the author, the label '*shakk*' often acquires a negative sense, namely that the objections in question are insignificant or trivial. This, for instance, is the sense intended by Avicenna when he uses the expression to label arguments deployed by atomists against hylomorphism.[7]

5 This outlook is evident, for instance, in Ibn al-Haytham, *Shukūk*, 3–4. On account of the broad scope of the attack that al-Ghazālī deploys against Avicenna's metaphysics, the *Tahāfut* should be classed as a refutation, rather than an aporetic text (though it should be added that refutation texts are of different types and do not always involve the complete rejection of all views criticised).

6 Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, *Shukūk*, 40–41.

7 Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.5, 302 ff.

2. Exegetical Commentaries on Avicennan texts. Typically identified by the labels '*sharḥ*' or sometimes '*tafsīr*', exegetical commentaries constitute a distinct genre; and for a work to qualify as belonging to this genre it must provide substantial exposition of the text commented on, either in full or in part, though it may fulfil other functions over and above the purely expository. By the mid twelfth century, the tradition of commentaries on Avicennan texts was still very much in its nascence. There is evidence that the *Ishārāt*, which later became the centre of a long and venerable exegetical tradition, had already been attracting a good deal of interest, but by al-Masʿūdī's time had yet to receive a fully fledged commentary.[8] According to al-Rāzī, being a short and difficult text full of philosophical profundities, the *Ishārāt* challenged his contemporaries to understand its abstruse contents and to resolve the numerous philosophical and exegetical problems it raised, yet none succeeded in this endeavour.[9] The only commentary known to have been written on the *Ishārāt* before al-Masʿūdī composed his *Shukūk*, or probably around the same time, is attributed to Ẓahīr al-Dīn al-Bayhaqī (d. 565/1170), though we have no extant copies of this work or information on how complete and substantial it was.[10] In any case, al-Bayhaqī's commentary, to my knowledge, is never cited in later philosophical literature, and should not be credited with initiating the exegetical tradition on the *Ishārāt*. We also have Ibn Ghaylān's expression of intent to write a refutation (hence, not an exegetical commentary) of selected parts of the *Ishārāt*, to be titled *al-Tanbīh ʿalā tamwīhāt kitāb al-Tanbīhāt* (*Drawing Attention to the Sophisms of the* [*Pointers and*] *Reminders*), though it is unclear whether or not he did undertake this project.[11] At any rate, the extant work titled *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, in which Ibn Ghaylān announces these plans, post-dates the *Shukūk*, so the *Tanbīh* is likely to have been intended as a sequel to al-Masʿūdī's work.[12]

As a distinct sub-class of exegetical commentaries, a small genre of counter-aporetic texts emerged in parallel to aporetic texts. These super-commentaries generally offer 'solutions' (*ḥall*), or 'responses' (*jawāb*), which resolve problems raised in aporetic commentaries, either by exposing the objections as off-target, or through the expository reinterpretation of the main text, or by

8 On this, see Shihadeh, 'Al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ*', Section III.

9 Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ*, 1, 2–3.

10 Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 4, 1763.

11 Ibn Ghaylān, *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, 11; 128; Shihadeh, 'Post-Ghazālian Critic', 141.

12 As pointed out already, Ibn Ghaylān praises al-Masʿūdī and cites his *Shukūk* (*Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, 111; pp. 29–30 above).

refining and developing aspects of the target system expounded therein. To all intents and purposes, therefore, the first of the long series of exegetical commentaries to be penned on the *Ishārāt* is al-Rāzī's *Jawābāt*, the counter-aporetic super-commentary he wrote in response to al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk*, which is high on expository content. The *Jawābāt* can properly be termed a '*sharḥ*'; and indeed, as I showed elsewhere, al-Rāzī himself refers to it simply as '*Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*' in the *Mabāḥith*, which predates his comprehensive commentary on the *Ishārāt*.[13] The latter is, of course, the first major exegetical commentary to be written on Avicenna's text.[14] In the same vein, Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī's *Kashf al-tamwīhāt fī sharḥ al-Tabīhāt* (*Exposing the Sophisms in 'The Commentary on the* [*Pointers and*] *Reminders'*), which responds to various contents of al-Rāzī's comprehensive commentary, especially its aporetic content, should be classed as an exegetical commentary (*sharḥ*).[15]

Earlier in the sixth/twelfth century, before the *Ishārāt* became the focus of a commentarial tradition, two other general philosophical texts of Avicenna appear to have enjoyed this privilege.[16] The text of choice for longer commentaries was the *Najāt*, which received at least two commentaries, namely a three-volume commentary by Ẓahīr al-Dīn al-Bayhaqī,[17] now lost, and one by a certain Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Naṣr al-Isfarāʾīnī al-Nīsābūrī, about whose life we know nothing though judging by the contents of the commentary he appears to have lived in the mid twelfth century.[18] Al-Isfarāʾīnī's commentary survives in several manuscripts, and is largely expository. The

13 Shihadeh, 'Al-Rāzī's Response', 2; al-Rāzī, *Mabāḥith*, 1, 198.

14 On the structure and functions of this text, see Shihadeh, 'Al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ*'.

15 That said, much of al-Āmidī's commentary is only implicitly expository. It often defends and elaborates Avicenna's views without referring explicitly to the text of the *Ishārāt*.

16 Avicenna's medical *Canon* was commented on from the eleventh century. Apart from the two texts discussed above, two other philosophical texts received a small number of commentaries, but these were not general in their subject matter. Avicenna's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* was commented on by each of his students Ibn Zayla and al-Jūzjānī (e.g. al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimma*, 99; 100–101); and his *Risālat al-Ṭayr* was commented on by Ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī and Ẓahīr al-Dīn al-Bayhaqī (Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 4, 1763).

17 Al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimma*, 160; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 4, 1763.

18 The metaphysical part of the latter work is published. Brockelmann wrongly attributes this work to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who never wrote a commentary on the *Najāt* (*GAL Suppl.* I, 815). One copy of this text, MS Istanbul, Köprülü, 890, is attributed in the catalogue of the Köprülü collection to Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥārithān al-Sarakhsī (d. 545/1150) (Şeşen, *Fihris*, 1, 439–440; on him, see al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimma*, 160; al-Samʿānī, *Taḥbīr*, 2, 175); however, the author's name is given in the body of the text as al-Isfarāʾīnī (f. 1^{b}).

other Avicennan text that received commentaries is *al-Khuṭba al-gharrāʾ*, a very short text of approximately 500 words. In 472/1079–1080, ʿUmar al-Khayyām produced a short interpretive translation into Persian, and around the middle of the next century al-Masʿūdī composed a more substantive, expository commentary on this work.[19] Interest in Avicenna's *Khuṭba* seems to persist until the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, as a further commentary is written by Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Tabrīzī (d. after 606/1210), a student of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.[20]

2.2 The Broad Outline

As will become clear in what follows, although al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk* is dedicated to a single Avicennan text, it is an aporetic commentary and not an exegetical one, and hence cannot properly be designated 'a *sharḥ*'. The book was intended by its author as an instalment in the *shukūk* genre, rather than a first attempt at a dedicated interpretive commentary on the *Ishārāt*. So even though al-Masʿūdī's book came to mark the genesis of the long exegetical tradition that grew around this Avicennan text, it is in fact generically at variance with the later tradition, including al-Rāzī's *Jawābāt*, as we have just explained. To my knowledge, it is the only aporetic commentary written on the *Ishārāt*.[21]

I *Preface and Conclusion*

In the preface and conclusion of the *Shukūk*, al-Masʿūdī informs us of the book's objectives and *modus operandi*. The preface goes as follows:

> These are puzzles (*shukūk*) and dubitations (*shubah*) that I encountered (*ʿaraḍat lī*) in some places in the *Ishārāt*. I have not lost hope of solving

19 Al-Khayyām, *Tarjama*, 228. Avicenna's text is also briefly cited by al-Rāzī (*Mabāḥith*, 2, 501).

20 This work is extant in several manuscript copies, for instance, MS Istanbul, Mehmed Asım Bey 238 (Şeşen, *Fihris*, 3, 108). Al-Tabrīzī does not seem to refer to al-Masʿūdī's commentary.

21 So the other commentaries, including the 'adjudication' (*muḥākamāt*) series of commentaries, are exegetical, although some include aporetic content, such as al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ*. Zayn al-Dīn Ṣadaqa's (d. Before 678/1279) *Sharḥ Masāʾil ʿawīṣa fī l-Ishārāt* (*Explicating Some Knotty Problems in 'The Pointers'*) seems to be an exegetical commentary, as the commentator is concerned mainly with explaining and developing Avicenna's views and arguments, rather than bringing them into question. For Ṣadaqa's death date, see Wisnovsky, 'Avicennism and Exegetical Practice', 353.

> (*ḥall*) them; for 'on certain days God bestows favours'.[22] So I have committed them to writing to keep them from slipping away. I have also complemented them with what I myself have established and arrived at through my own research (*intahā ilay-hi baḥth-ī*) into some problems. I ask God, exalted, to illuminate our insight by guiding us to truth, and to prevent us from falsehood and error. [The Prophet], may God's peace be upon him, used to pray, 'Our Lord, make plain to us things as they truly are, and make plain to us the truth of the true and guide us to follow it, and the falsity of the false and guide us to eschew it!' I have presented these puzzles to the most excellent of my contemporaries, so that they may assist me with some of their burden (*aʿbāʾ*). For the traveller on a journey may need the guidance and company [of fellow travellers].[23]

The book concludes thus:

> These are some of the puzzles that I have been turning over in my mind. In addition to these, I have remarks on further discussions [in the *Ishārāt*], which can be construed as secondary problems (*furūʿ*) based on primary problems that we have discussed, such as the proving of intellects and souls on the basis of both the manner in which things proceed from the First Principle and [the doctrine] that from one only one thing proceeds, and the like. To the extent that the primary doctrines are sound, secondary ones will follow from them. For this reason, I have decided to neglect [these secondary doctrines], considering that there is little value in [pursuing] them. God guides and leads us to what is true and correct. May the mercy of God be upon those who read [this book of mine] in a spirit of impartiality (*bi-ʿayn al-inṣāf*), who give their attention to the discussion rather than the discussant, and who renounce prejudice and partisanship (*al-mayl wa-l-ʿaṣabiyya*) so as to seek truth immune from their influence. We rely on God's favour to open before us the gates of certainty, to illuminate our hearts with the lights of knowledge, to remove affliction, to eliminate dubitations (*shubah*), and to make plain to us the truth of the true and the falsity of the false![24]

22 Echoing part of a *ḥadīth*: '*inna li-rabbi-kum fī ayyām dahri-kum nafaḥāt*' (on this *ḥadīth*, see, for instance, al-Zabīdī, *Itḥāf*, 3, 280–281).

23 *Shukūk*, 196.

24 *Shukūk*, 288.

Several important points are made in these two passages. As always, however, we must exercise due caution with the author's own claims of what he does and achieves in his book; so these points need not be taken entirely at face value.

Al-Masʿūdī, first of all, declares that the principal purpose of the book is to record 'puzzles' and 'dubitations' that he 'encountered' in the *Ishārāt*. The commentator's choice of the verb 'encountered' is noteworthy, as it suggests that he did not read the *Ishārāt* intent on finding faults in the text and thereby refuting its author's views, but that he merely stumbled across them while closely studying Avicenna's book. The expression *shubha*, which occurs in the preface and conclusion and is rendered here as 'dubitation', does not seem to be used in a very precise sense, but is likely intended as a synonym of *shakk*.

These problems, as we also learn from the preface, need to be 'solved', and as such they constitute a 'burden' on our commentator. Their burdensome nature implies that some, or all, still await to be solved. Al-Masʿūdī has thus been 'turning the problems over in his mind', and 'has not lost hope' that one day—with God's help, as he tells us—he will solve them. Feeling that he would do with some human assistance too, he recorded these problems and circulated them to some learned contemporaries, in the hope that they would be able to 'share some of the burden' and offer assistance towards solving them. Al-Rāzī takes up the invitation: in the preface to the *Jawābāt*, he tells us how the *Shukūk* was presented to him by an unidentified individual, who asked him 'to wade into the oceans of these problems, and to solve the difficulties posed by these knotty puzzles (*muʿḍilāt*)'.[25]

Thus far, one gets the impression that al-Masʿūdī's stance towards Avicenna is rather benign. He does not go out of his way to dig up problems in Avicenna's philosophical system, or to construct objections to it, but supposedly stumbles upon some problems almost by accident. He feels burdened by the problems he has identified, and spares no effort to solve them. As we have already seen, the objection (*shakk*) and solution (*ḥall*), which often come as a pair, are normally undertaken by two different individuals, one who raises the objections and another who responds to them and defends or develops the system criticised. Al-Masʿūdī does the former, and expresses his desire and hope to do the latter. And, as noted, a 'solution', properly speaking, should not deviate radically from the target system, but should be conducted as much as possible within its parameters.

25 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 11.

Notwithstanding, al-Masʿūdī also informs us in the preface that he has complemented his discussion of some of the problems identified in the *Ishārāt* with the results of his 'own research' (*baḥth*). As we shall see, the majority of the problems are indeed presented, not merely as puzzles that need solving, but rather as objections to Avicennan views, coupled with more positive investigations in which the commentator submits and defends views of his own, which are contrary to Avicennan positions. This dual function of the commentary is reflected in its title, *al-Mabāḥith wa-l-shukūk* (*Investigations and Objections*)—the expression '*mabḥath*' here denotes the treatment of a philosophical problem (*masʾala*) through productive research (*baḥth*), as opposed to unconstructive criticism. At first glance, these positive contributions appear to be attempts by the commentator to 'solve' some of the problems he raises. However, in all or most cases, they certainly are not solutions; and indeed they are never presented as such. For, as I shall explain shortly, al-Masʿūdī's objections often target quite fundamental and defining doctrines of Avicennan philosophy, and the corresponding alternative views he proposes are profoundly incompatible with it.

For solutions to most of al-Masʿūdī's objections, we must turn to al-Rāzī's *Jawābāt*. Although he titles his work using the more common expression 'response' (*jawāb*), al-Rāzī writes in the preface that his task will be 'to wade into the oceans of these problems, and to solve (*aḥulla*) the difficulties posed by these knotty puzzles'.[26] The conventional expression 'solution' (*ḥall*) is accordingly used at several points within the text. In the *Mabāḥith*, he also speaks of 'solving' the objection quoted from the *Shukūk*.[27]

A further key point made in the conclusion of the *Shukūk* is that al-Masʿūdī indicates his commitment to the ideal of dispassionate philosophical enquiry. Conscious that the debate between traditional Avicennists and critics of Avicenna has often been hostile, and that his work may be construed as an episode in an ongoing onslaught on Avicennan philosophy, he is keen to dispel this notion. He encourages his readers to direct their attention to the contents of the text and not to the author, and to abstain from 'prejudice and partisanship' (*al-mayl wa-l-ʿaṣabiyya*) and be impartial (*inṣāf*) in their assessment of his ideas. The same point is echoed twice in the body of the book, where it is stated that one who refrains from prejudice and partisanship and weighs the problems under discussion fairly will realise that the author's views are correct.[28]

26 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 11; cf. 15; 31; 35.

27 Al-Rāzī, *Mabāḥith*, 2, 317; see p. 4, n. 14, above.

28 *Shukūk*, 215–270.

By implication, al-Masʿūdī himself adheres to the same attitude in the *Shukūk*. And we have already seen him, in a prefatory proviso in his commentary on *al-Khuṭba al-gharrāʾ*, explicitly declare his commitment, in precisely the same terms, to eschew 'prejudice and partisanship' while treating Avicenna's ideas.[29] In the *Shukūk* too, he is careful not to appear motivated by either partisan, anti-Avicennan prejudice or the desire to defend a competing thought or belief system.

II *Structure*

The *Shukūk* consists of fifteen sections, whose contents we shall overview in the next section. In the body of the text, each is headed 'problem' (*masʾala*) and given an ordinal number. The two earliest manuscript copies are furnished with a prefatory table of contents in which substantive section headings are provided, and which in all likelihood originates with the author.[30] The sections are of varying length, the longest being Section 4, and the shortest Sections 15 and 6.

From what al-Masʿūdī tells us in the conclusion, the *Shukūk* contains only some of the problems that he identified in the *Ishārāt*. The selection of which topics to include and which to leave out, and hence which passages from the *Ishārāt* to comment on, is determined, to an extent, by the distinction he makes between foundational, 'primary doctrines', or 'principles', (*uṣūl*) and 'secondary doctrines' (*furūʿ*), that is, doctrines grounded in primary ones.[31] This distinction is applied widely in *kalām* and jurisprudence, and much less so in philosophy. We have already seen the former term used in *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, where two theories are described as 'principal doctrines' (*aṣl kabīr*) of Avicennan philosophy, or more specifically, of Avicenna's theory of emanation, on which many secondary doctrines are premised—namely, the doctrine of atemporal creation and the doctrine that from a cause that is absolutely one only one effect proceeds.[32] As al-Masʿūdī indicates, some secondary problems are left out because the primary problems on which they are based have already been treated in the book. He gives the example of the theory of the celestial souls and

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29 See p. 21 above.

30 See pp. 169–172 below.

31 *Shukūk*, 288.

32 See pp. 37 and 40 above. He writes concerning the latter: 'This is one of the principal doctrines of the philosophers, and a foundational problem on which numerous secondary doctrines are based (*min ummahāt al-masāʾil yanbanī ʿalay-hā furūʿ kathīra*)' (*Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, f. 41ᵃ).

TABLE *Section headings of the* Shukūk, *with passages commented on from the* Ishārāt[33]

	Shukūk	*Ishārāt*: Lemmata[34]	*Ishārāt*: Further Citations
1.	Establishing the existence of matter	1.6 (2, 168–173)	1.10 (2, 182–183)
2.	Establishing the finitude of bodies	1.11 (2, 183–190)	
3.	That the power that preserves the mixture is the soul	3.5–6 (2, 352–357)	
4.	The reality of perceptions, and the external and internal senses	3.7 (2, 359–366) 3.13 (2, 396–398)	3.9 (2, 373–376)
5.	That the rational soul is not imprinted in the body	3.16 (2, 404–408)	7.2–5 (3, 244–260)
6.	That some existents are beyond the grasp of the senses	4.1 (3, 7–9)	
7.	Establishing the existence of the Necessary of Existence and the finitude of causes	4.12 (3, 23–24)	
8.	Establishing the oneness of the Necessary of Existence	4.18 (3, 36–41)	4.21–22 (3, 44–46)
9.	That the continued existence of the effect depends on the continued existence of its cause	4.10 (3, 20)	5.1–3 (3, 57–70)
10.	That the possibility of coming-to-be is an attribute that exists prior to coming-to-be	5.6 (3, 78–84)	
11.	That from one only one effect can proceed	5.11 (3, 97–102)	
12.	That the activities of corporeal powers are finite	6.19 (3, 165–169) 6.23 (3, 172–174)	
13.	That the human soul is not affected by the loss of the body through death	7.2 (3, 244–248)	7.2–4 (3, 249–252)
14.	That the human soul cannot possibly pass away	7.6 (3, 261–264)	
15.	[The knowledge that the Necessary of Existence has of Itself and of things other than Itself]	7.15 (3, 278) 7.21 (3, 295–296)	

33 For the Arabic table of contents, see p. 195 below.

34 All references here are to Part II of the *Ishārāt*.

intellects, premised on both the theory of how things proceed from the First Principle (which seems to involve several sub-theories), and the principle that from an absolutely simple cause only one effect can proceed. These two underpinnings are treated, respectively, in Sections 9 and 10, and in Section 11 of the *Shukūk*, and, as it happens, they correspond to the two theories described in *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba* as 'principal doctrines' of Avicennan philosophy.[35] The point made in the conclusion of the *Shukūk* concerning the selection of problems is confirmed, or probably echoed, in the preface to al-Rāzī's *Jawābāt*, where he writes that the author of the *Shukūk* 'selected, out of [the problems of] philosophy, those that are primary, principal, foundational and important (*al-uṣūl wa-l-ummahāt wa-l-qawāʿid wa-l-muhimmāt*)'.[36] That said, al-Masʿūdī does not claim that all the problems treated in the book are 'primary'. Some are ones that he would certainly class as 'secondary', a case in point being Section 14, in which the commentary starts with the remark that Avicenna 'based this on an aforementioned principle', which was treated in Section 10.[37] Likewise, Section 5 presupposes and references Section 4.[38]

The sectional commentaries do not have a fixed internal structure. Unlike al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ* on the *Ishārāt*, which owes its elaborate structure to its being a systematic and multifunctional exegetical commentary, al-Masʿūdī's work is a much simpler, mono-functional aporetic commentary.[39] Each discussion is hence conducted on an *ad hoc* basis, depending on the nature of the objection raised on the Avicennan text. The structural simplicity of sectional commentaries, of course, also reflects the fact that the *Shukūk* was breaking new ground, and was not part of a developed commentarial tradition, with established conventions, structures and debates. The following elements can be identified in sectional commentaries:

1. A passage from the *Ishārāt*. Each section begins, of course, by quoting a passage from the *Ishārāt*, introduced by, 'Al-Shaykh Abū ʿAlī says' (*qāla*), or 'He, may the mercy of God be upon him, says'. This is followed by commentary, introduced by, 'I say' (*qultu* or *aqūlu*). Further passages from the *Ishārāt* are occasionally cited either at the beginning, or in the course, of the commentary, in order to explain the contents and objectives of the main passage

35 See pp. 37–40 above.

36 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 11.

37 *Shukūk*, 285. See also our study of Section 14, pp. 136–141 below.

38 *Shukūk*, 240.

39 On the structure of al-Rāzī's commentary, see Shihadeh, 'Al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ*'.

cited, or to bring into the discussion further aspects or details of the Avicennan views under consideration. Most passages from the *Ishārāt* are cited in their entirety, but others, especially supplementary passages appearing within sectional commentaries, are often cited partially and appended with '*et cetera*' (*ilā ākhiri-hi*). The table on p. 54 lists all the Avicennan passages commented on or cited. No other Avicennan works are referenced in the *Shukūk*.

2. Expository interpretation. As to be expected of an aporetic commentary, the *Shukūk* gives relatively little space to the expository interpretation of the main text, which, by contrast, is a principal function of an exegetical commentary. The preface, as we have seen, does not mention expository interpretation among the book's objectives; and nowhere in the book is the commentary described using such terms as '*sharḥ*' or '*tafsīr*'. The commentator appears to assume that most passages commented on from the *Ishārāt* will be understood by his readers with minimal interpretation. So he does not seem to regard the little expository content of his commentary as especially original or illuminating, despite its admirable lucidity. For example, he describes the longest instance of expository interpretation, which occurs in Section 4, merely as a 'report' of 'what the majority [of philosophers] have agreed upon'—so it is only a report (*ḥikāya*) and a summary, rather than an original and thoroughgoing exposition.[40] An exception is the interpretation provided at the start of Section 8, which offers a tidy and creative reading of a rather fraught passage from the *Ishārāt*, as we shall see.[41] In most sections (specifically, Sections 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 13), the commentary begins with a very brief explanation of Avicenna's text, sometimes introduced by 'his objective is' (*gharaḍ*, *maqṣūd*, *arāda an*), which either clarifies the contents of the main text, or provides an indication of their wider context. Sections 2 and 3 contain no expository commentary at all. Other sections (specifically, Sections 4, 8, 12 and 14) start with a relatively longer, but not extensive, expository commentary.

3. Objections and puzzles. These, of course, are the principal elements of the commentary. Despite the appearance of the expressions '*shakk*' and '*shubha*', both in the plural, in the book's preface and conclusion (and in the case of the former expression, in the title), neither expression is ever used within the sectional commentaries themselves, except in Section 15 where '*shukūk*' refers

40 *Shukūk*, 212.

41 See pp. 69–70 below.

to al-Ghazālī's objections against certain Avicennan views. In the course of the commentary, al-Masʿūdī sometimes refers to the objections he raises using the term '*ishkāl*' (problem), which more or less has the same sense as '*shakk*'.[42] He twice describes them as 'objections' (*iʿtirāḍ*).[43] In al-Rāzī's *Jawābāt*, this expression becomes the standard characterisation of the problems raised in the *Shukūk*, and al-Masʿūdī is referred to constantly as 'the esteemed objector' (*al-fāḍil al-muʿtariḍ*).[44] Other markers are employed in the *Shukūk* to signpost criticisms, such as 'one may argue' (*li-qāʾil an yaqūla*) (in Sections 1 and 2),[45] 'this [i.e. an Avicennan view] is open to question' (*fī-hi naẓar*) (in Sections 3 and 8),[46] and 'this [i.e. an Avicennan argument] falls short of its intended objective' (e.g. *lā yafī bi-hādhā l-gharaḍ, lā yufīdu hādhā l-maṭlūb*) (in Sections 1, 6 and 10).[47] Some objections, however, are not marked so clearly. After an objection is submitted, the ensuing discussion sometimes proceeds in the question-and-answer dialectical mode characteristic of *kalām*: 'If it is said …' (*in qīla*, *in qultum*, *in qālū*), 'we will say …' (*qulnā*), or 'the response is …' (*al-jawāb*).

4. Alternative views and arguments. As well as criticising Avicenna's doctrines and arguments, al-Masʿūdī, in some sections, submits and defends his own alternative theses concerning the problems under discussion. Some are fully fledged theories, explained and argued in detail, as, for instance, is the case in Sections 1 and 10 discussed below.[48] These are sometimes marked by expressions that indicate positive 'investigation' aiming at knowledge of reality, as opposed to the raising of objections against someone else's thought system—most importantly, 'critical investigation' (*taḥqīq*), 'research' (*baḥth*), 'bringing to light' (*kashf*) and 'reflection' (*naẓar*).[49] For instance, in one discussion, al-

42 *Shukūk*, 204; 228; 273; 275; 280; 282; 286; 287.

43 *Shukūk*, 253; 260.

44 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, *passim*. In the preface, he describes the contents of the *Shukūk* as 'investigations and objections' (*abḥāth wa-iʿtirāḍāt*) (*Jawābāt*, 11). He sometimes refers to al-Masʿūdī's objections using the expression '*ishkāl*' (e.g. *Jawābāt*, 15; 43; 51).

45 *Shukūk*, 197; 205. This phrase becomes al-Rāzī's standard marker for his own objections to Avicenna's views in his commentary on the *Ishārāt* (Shihadeh, 'Al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ*').

46 *Shukūk*, 205; 252.

47 *Shukūk*, 197; 246; 240.

48 See Chapters 4 and 6 below.

49 *Shukūk*, 199; 212; 250. Though there are occasional exceptions, the expression '*taḥqīq*' should not be rendered as 'verification', as has become the norm in recent studies. Such a rendering, first of all, is a mistranslation: 'to verify/verification' correspond to '*taḥaqqaqa/*

Masʿūdī's own position is introduced as 'what [we] have arrived at through [our] research and investigation' (*alladhī intahā ilay-hi l-baḥth wa-l-naẓar*).[50] In other discussions, the alternative view or argument is submitted tentatively as a hypothesis, with little or no substantiation. For instance, in Section 11 an Avicennan theory is criticised, and at the very end of the section an alternative theory is briefly proposed as a possibility that is at least as compelling as the theory criticised.[51] In Section 2, an Avicennan proof is confuted; and although an improved proof is proposed, in the end it is pronounced unsound on exactly the same grounds.[52]

As already noted, these elements do not appear in a fixed order within the sectional commentaries of the *Shukūk*; and this fact, particularly the relative ordering of objections and alternative views, drew sharp criticism from al-Rāzī. In some discussions, as for instance in Section 1, al-Masʿūdī criticises Avicenna's views first, before going on to submit his own thesis.[53] Elsewhere, the thesis comes before the complaint, as for instance in Section 4, where al-Masʿūdī proceeds by summarising the Avicennan theory of perception and then writes, 'What we have just reported (*ḥakā*) is what the majority have agreed upon. As to what [we] have arrived at through [our] research and investigation …'.[54] He then summarises his own alternative theory, which draws on Abū l-Barakāt, and follows that with arguments against Avicenna's position and in support of his own. Al-Rāzī disapproves of this procedure, as he remarks in the *Jawābāt*:

> This esteemed [objector] ought to start by objecting to the arguments he cites from the *Ishārāt* and only then proceed to set out his own position.

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taḥaqquq (*min*)', and not to '*ḥaqqaqa/taḥqīq*'. What '*taḥqīq*' means is simply to arrive at knowledge of some truth or reality (*ḥaqq*, *ḥaqīqa*), as opposed, for instance, to accepting a doctrine more or less uncritically (*taqlīd*) or to engaging merely in the discussion, criticism or refutation of some doctrine or other. To arrive at knowledge, one should investigate (*baḥth*, *naẓar*) *thoroughly* and *critically* using valid means and sound premises. In theory, the investigation of a problem should start with an open mind, and not from a view that the investigator then seeks to verify. A good investigator should ask, 'Who among these suspects is guilty?', rather than start, for some reason or other, with a presumption of the guilt of Zayd and then seek to *verify* it.

50 *Shukūk*, 212.

51 *Shukūk*, 277–278.

52 *Shukūk*, 203–204.

53 *Shukūk*, 199.

54 *Shukūk*, 212.

> For it is insufficient for one who goes against the majority (*jumhūr*) view on a certain point [simply] to set out his own view. Instead, he should [first] confute the arguments of [his] predecessors and identify any weakness or error in the premises of these arguments.[55]

Elsewhere in the *Jawābāt*, al-Rāzī complains against the relative organisation, not only of the objections and alternative theses, but also of the brief expository interpretation of Avicenna's views. He remarks on Section 3 of the *Shukūk*:

> This discussion, in my view, is unbefitting of its writer's sharpness of thought and his in-depth study of tortuous philosophical subjects; and this is in two ways. The first is that one who advances a certain view, and then raises a question concerning it, must answer it in such a way that his first view remains intact. However, if in his answer he advances a new view, which is unrelated to his first view, this will amount to an admission that the first view is weak and unsustainable.[56]

Al-Rāzī goes on to explain that this is exactly what al-Masʿūdī does in Section 3: (1) al-Masʿūdī starts by accusing Avicenna of circularity for suggesting that the rational soul of the foetus combines the mixture of its body, although its rational soul requires a suitably prepared body before it comes to be; (2) he does not report Avicenna's view, put forth in the *Mubāḥathāt*, that the mixture of the foetus's body is initially combined by the souls of its parents; (3) yet he then considers the possibility that the mixture of the foetus's body be initially combined by the souls of its parents, which is introduced with, 'if it is said' (*fa-in qīla*). According to al-Rāzī, the last step in al-Masʿūdī's discussion renders the first step superfluous, and exposes it as based on a misinterpretation of Avicenna.[57]

2.3 A Synopsis

What follows here is a section-by-section overview of the contents of the *Shukūk*, exploring the Avicennan views and arguments discussed and al-

55 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 33; Shihadeh, 'Al-Rāzī's Response', 6.

56 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 29.

57 See p. 62 below; Shihadeh, 'Al-Rāzī's Response', 6.

Masʿūdī's main criticisms. A more thorough analysis and contextualisation of some discussions is provided in Chapters 3–6, but will not be attempted in the present section.

Section 1. Establishing the Existence of Matter

Discussed in Chapter 6. In *Ishārāt* II.1.6, Avicenna proves the existence of prime matter starting from body's susceptibility to division.[58] Body is continuous, but also divisible. So it has actual continuity, and at the same time the potentiality for discontinuity, which is the contrary of continuity. Therefore, body is a complex of two principles: one which provides its actual continuity, and another which provides its potentiality for discontinuity. The former is corporeal form, and the latter is prime matter, which of itself lacks continuity and extension.

Al-Masʿūdī objects to the claim that when body is divided, substantial continuity passes away.[59] What is lost with division, he argues, is continuity as an accident in the category of continuous quantity, whose subject is body. Corporeity, on the other hand, does not change, as the parts that result from dividing a body are no less corporeal than the original body. Therefore, Avicenna's argument fails to demonstrate that body consists of prime matter and form.

The section concludes with a defence of an alternative hylomorphic theory, according to which prime matter is corporeal and hence none other than body.[60] Al-Masʿūdī supports this theory by arguing that when a body undergoes change in its species form, one essence passes away and another comes to be, yet something remains unchanged in the body, neither passing away nor coming to be. So body is a complex of two principles: form, whose passing away and coming to be accounts for the change, and prime matter, which remains unaltered. Al-Rāzī observes that both al-Masʿūdī's objection and theory of matter are borrowed from Abū l-Barakāt.[61]

Section 2. Establishing the Finitude of Bodies

In an almost impenetrable passage, *Ishārāt* II.1.11, Avicenna provides a geometrical *reductio ad absurdum* to establish the finitude of space, which can be

58 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 168–173; cf. Shihadeh, 'Avicenna's Corporeal Form and Proof of Prime Matter', 370–378.

59 *Shukūk*, 197–199.

60 *Shukūk*, 199–200.

61 See Section 6.4 below.

summarised as follows.[62] If we postulate two lines that share the same starting point A, and are each infinite in one direction, we can postulate a third line starting from a given point B_1 on one of the two lines, and ending at point C_1 on the other line, where B_1 and C_1 are equidistant to A. We may then postulate further lines connecting the two lines starting from A (B_2C_2, B_3C_3, etc.), which run parallel to the line B_1C_1 and increase in length at fixed increments (and hence, with each increment, become increasingly distant from A). Now, either there is a line B_nC_n, which contains all increments and beyond which no further increments are possible, or there is no such line. The former contradicts our initial postulate that the two lines starting from A are infinite; for lines AB_n and AC_n must be finite. The latter implies that there is an infinite line $B_\infty C_\infty$ that is bounded by the two lines starting from A. However, being at once infinite and bounded is a contradiction. Therefore, the initial assumption that the two lines starting from A are infinite is false; and it follows that they must be finite.

Al-Masʿūdī objects that if we postulate that the lines (B_2C_2, B_3C_3, etc.) increment in length *ad infinitum*, it does not follow that there must be a line that contains all increments and beyond which no further increments are possible.[63] Indeed it is impossible to postulate an individual line that contains an infinite number of equal increments of length; for whatever line we postulate, there will be a line longer than it. Therefore, no absurdity follows from the postulate that the two lines starting from A are infinite.

At the end of the section, al-Masʿūdī proposes an alternative *reductio*, which he describes as simpler and shorter than Avicenna's. It runs as follows.[64] If we postulate the two lines starting from A forming an obtuse angle with each other, and if we then take any point B on the first line and any point C on the second line, the line BC will be longer than either AB or AC. Then if we assume that each of AB and AC is infinite, line BC, which is the longest line of the three, must also be infinite. So line BC will be infinite, yet at the same time bounded by two points on two other lines, which is a contradiction. Al-Masʿūdī, nonetheless, remarks that this improved proof is susceptible to the same objection raised against Avicenna's proof. In his *Jawābāt*, al-Rāzī says that a similar argument was put forth in an unidentified work by Rashīd al-Dīn Waṭwāṭ, but he stops short of asserting that al-Masʿūdī borrowed it from him.[65]

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62 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 183–190. See also al-Rāzī's lengthy interpretation of the passage (*Sharḥ*, 2, 47–54).

63 *Shukūk*, 201–202.

64 *Shukūk*, 203–204.

65 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 26.

Section 3. That the Power That Preserves the Mixture is the Soul

In *Ishārāt* II.3.5, Avicenna argues that the soul is different from either the corporeity or mixture (or temperament, *mizāj*) of the human body, starting from evidence of the soul's activity in the body.[66] The body moves in a manner different from the motion that its mixture inclines towards by its nature, and it perceives things by which the mixture either would not be affected (because they are identical to it in kind), or would be transmuted (because they are contrary to it). Therefore, there must be something other than the mixture that explains bodily movement and perception. What is more, the mixture of the body consists of contrary elements that are naturally predisposed to separate from each other. So there must be a force that causes them to combine (*jamaʿa*) and mix and then preserves (*ḥafiẓa*) their combination; and this force cannot be an activity of the mixture itself, since it causes the mixture's coming-to-be and hence precedes it. Therefore, it must be an activity of the human soul.

Al-Masʿūdī complains that the human soul cannot cause the combination of the mixture, since the soul only comes to be once there is complete preparedness (*tamām al-istiʿdād*) for its coming-to-be, which consists of a fully formed human body possessed of a balanced mixture.[67] So the human soul comes to be after the coming-to-be of the mixture. Notwithstanding, al-Masʿūdī agrees that the mixture of the body is combined and preserved by a soul, but he argues that this must be the vegetative soul, rather than the rational soul. The vegetative soul, as he goes on to elaborate in some detail, comes about in the human body before the rational soul comes to pass, and it is its activity that explains the growth and nutrition of the foetus, and hence the development and preservation of its mixture. At the end of the section, al-Masʿūdī concedes the possibility that the foetus is managed by the vegetative and animal soul of its mother, though he does not explain the role of her animal soul in the process.[68]

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66 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 350–355.

67 *Shukūk*, 205–206.

68 As al-Rāzī (*Jawābāt*, 27–28) points out, Avicenna maintains in the *Mubāḥathāt* (123; 169–170) that the mixture of the foetus's body is combined by the souls of its parents. Al-Ṭūsī (*Ḥall*, 2, 355–356) cites the Psychology of the *Shifāʾ* (*Nafs*, 31), where Avicenna asserts that the foetus's soul is what combines the mixture of its body. This question goes beyond our present purposes.

Section 4. The Reality of Perceptions, and the External and Internal Senses

The longest section in the *Shukūk*, Section 4 delivers an extensive rebuttal of Avicenna's theory of perception, especially sensory perception, and advocates a radically different theory.[69] I argue in the next section that this discussion may have an indirect and unstated theological objective. The main thrust of al-Masʿūdī's criticism appears twofold: first, Avicenna constructs a modular, and hence fragmentary psychology, which assigns sensory activities to discrete external and internal senses, and intellection to the rational soul; and second, it collapses the process of sensory perception into the senses, which are made both the perceivers and strictly speaking the locations of perceptible objects. In doing so, Avicenna creates a gulf between the rational soul and objects of perception in the extra-mental world. Under the influence of Abū l-Barakāt, al-Masʿūdī reassigns all perceptual activities to the rational soul, and externalises the process of perception, such that objects are perceived in the extra-mental world.

Taking his cue from *Ishārāt* II.3.7 and II.3.13, al-Masʿūdī begins with a lucid enunciation of the Avicennan account of sensory and intellectual perception.[70] According to Avicenna, we are told, perception occurs when the perceiver comes into contact (*mulāqāt*) with the object of perception, such that the former becomes imprinted (*irtisām*) with a representation (*mithāl*) of the latter. Faculties of perception divide into bodily and non-bodily ones. The non-bodily perceiver in the human being is the rational soul, which has the capacity for intellection; and its objects of perception are both universals, which are perceived when their forms obtain and become imprinted in the rational soul, and incorporeal particular entities. The external and internal senses, which exist in the body, perceive both corporeal things and imaginations. An external object is perceived when the perceiving faculty is imprinted with a representation of the object, which occurs when the sense organ, in which the faculty is present and which it uses as its instrument, comes into contact with the external object and becomes affected by it. The sense organ, accordingly, becomes the meeting place for the faculty and the representation. Avicenna explains all types of

69 I explored this discussion and its wider context in an unpublished paper titled 'Theories of Perception in Twelfth Century Post-Avicennan Philosophy', which was presented at 'In the Age of Averroes: Arabic Thought at the End of the Classical Period', a conference held at the Warburg Institute on 14–16 February 2008.

70 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 359–366; 2, 396–398; *Shukūk*, 209–212. On Avicenna's theory of perception, see, for instance, Sebti, 'Le Statut Ontologique de l'Image'; McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 96 ff.; Kukkonen, 'Faculties in Arabic Philosophy'.

perception in this way, which is why, for instance, he defends an intromission theory of visual perception, according to which vision occurs when external objects become imprinted in the eye.[71]

Countering this theory of perception, which, al-Masʿūdī says, was accepted by the majority (*al-aktharūn*, *al-jumhūr*) of his contemporaries, our commentator defends and develops two theses advocated by Abū l-Barakāt.[72] The first is the theory that perception should be conceived not as contact between the perceiver and the object of perception, but rather as a state that the perceiver has in relation (*ḥāla iḍāfiyya*) to the perceived object.[73] Al-Masʿūdī substantiates this view with several arguments. For instance, I can perceive myself; however, self-perception cannot possibly involve the representation of oneself within oneself, so perception is not the representation of the perceived in the perceiver. A discussion of a possible response ensues.[74]

The second thesis adopted from Abū l-Barakāt is that the sole perceiver of all types of perception, including the intellectual perception of intelligibles and the sensory perception of particulars, is the rational soul.[75] Al-Masʿūdī argues that if intelligibles are perceived by one part of the human being (the rational soul) and particulars by a different part (the faculties in the body, using bodily organs), the individual would consist of two perceivers, rather than be one perceiver, as is obviously and unquestionably the case. So the rational soul perceives intelligibles in itself, and perceives sensibles using the sense organs as instruments. However, it may be argued, in defence of Avicenna's theory of perception, that it does not entail a duality of perceivers within the human individual, because the sensory faculty perceives an external object and then passes on the content of its perception to the rational soul, which becomes aware of it. Al-Masʿūdī asks in response whether or not the soul, on this model, will perceive the perceptual content conveyed to it. If it perceives it, then the function of the sensory faculty is not to perceive, but only to pass on some content to the soul. If the soul does not perceive the content, then it will merely be aware that a certain faculty perceived something; and it follows that I should not know what my eyes and ears perceive.

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71 *Shukūk*, 211–212. On Avicenna's theory of vision, see Hasse, *Avicenna's* De anima, 107 ff.; McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 102 ff.

72 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 2, 394 ff. For a discussion, see Pines, 'La Conception de la Conscience de Soi'.

73 *Shukūk*, 212.

74 *Shukūk*, 212–215.

75 *Shukūk*, 215–217.

As an application of this theory of perception, and again drawing partly on Abū l-Barakāt, al-Masʿūdī then defends at length an extramission theory of vision and attacks Avicenna's intromission theory.[76] Part of this discussion is quoted in al-Rāzī's *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*.[77] Al-Masʿūdī argues, for instance, that if vision occurs when the image of an external object becomes imprinted in the eye and is then passed on to the brain, then the image would be extremely small; so we should perceive a mountain as a miniscule object no larger in magnitude than its representation in our brain.[78] However, we perceive not only the shape and colours of a mountain, but also its magnitude; therefore, what we perceive is the mountain itself, rather than its replica in our eyes or brain. The reality of vision, al-Masʿūdī explains, consists of the soul's awareness of the visual object through the mediation of specific instruments, which in the first instance are the eye, the pneuma existing therein, and the luminosity (*nūr al-ʿayn*) that is an accident that inheres in the pneuma. Vision, nonetheless, does not involve the emission of a ray from the eye towards the visual object, but occurs rather when the cone of air separating the eye and the object is affected by the luminosity in the eye such that it obtains a similar luminous quality. In this process, the affected cone of air becomes an instrument for the rational soul to perceive the external object through the air's contact with it.[79] Al-Masʿūdī addresses the following three defences of intromission, of which I shall briefly discuss the third. The first is that the image of a mountain impressed in the eye is analogous to the image of a mountain impressed in a small mirror; just as, in the latter case, we are able to perceive the large size of the object despite the smallness of the image in the mirror, we can likewise perceive the size of the mountain despite the smallness of the image in our eye and brain.[80] The second is that double vision is caused by the misalignment of the optical nerves, which results in the brain perceiving the two images impressed in the eyes separately; this indicates that vision consists of the perception of images in the eyes, which are then passed on to the brain.[81]

For the third defence of the theory of intromission, al-Masʿūdī draws on *Ishārāt* II.3.9, where Avicenna argues for the existence of the faculty known as the common sense. We perceive a drop of rain as a line, and this attests that what we perceive is not the drop itself, but rather the image impressed

76 *Shukūk*, 218–227.

77 See p. 4, n. 14 above.

78 *Shukūk*, 223–224.

79 *Shukūk*, 222–223.

80 *Shukūk*, 218–221.

81 *Shukūk*, 224–227.

on our faculties, which lingers for a short moment before it fades away.[82] Al-Masʿūdī concedes that this observation does indicate the general notion that the process of vision involves the impression of an image, but does not constitute conclusive evidence that the impression occurs in the eye or the brain. His alternative explanation is that since the air separating the eye from the visual object serves as an instrument of vision, the image of the object will become impressed on the surface of the air that touches the object. So it is on that thin film of air that the impression may linger momentarily and be perceived by the soul even after the object has moved to a different location.

Al-Masʿūdī then refutes Avicenna's theory of the internal senses. He argues, for instance, against the notion of the common sense—a faculty that, according to Avicenna, is located in the anterior ventricle in the brain and receives and integrates the sensory input conveyed to it by the external senses. He submits that this view leads to the clearly absurd implication that the sweetness and heat that one perceives, respectively, in the mouth and on the skin of one's hand should be perceived, as sweetness and heat, once more in the brain.[83] The upshot of al-Masʿūdī's negation of the internal senses is that the rational soul alone is responsible for all perceptual activity, both external and internal, within the individual, and accordingly that no auxiliary faculties need be postulated to account for any type of perceptual activity. 'All perception belongs to the [rational] soul, and there is no perceiver other than the soul'.[84] The soul, nonetheless, employs the different ventricles of the brain as instruments for different types of internal perception, just as it employs different sense organs (and indeed the air) as instruments for different types of sensory perception.[85]

Section 5. That the Rational Soul is not Imprinted in the Body

Following on from his treatment of sensory perception in Section 4, al-Masʿūdī turns to intellection. In *Ishārāt* II.3.16, Avicenna explains that since the intelligibles are indivisible, they cannot become impressed on a divisible thing; so they cannot become impressed within the human body in the same way that sensory images become impressed within the perceiver's sensory organs and brain. The intelligibles, therefore, are perceived by a thing that is neither a body nor imprinted in a body, namely the immaterial rational soul.[86]

82 *Shukūk*, 228–229; Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 374–376.

83 *Shukūk*, 232–233.

84 *Shukūk*, 236.

85 *Shukūk*, 236.

86 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 404–408. On the soul's intellection of the intelligibles, see, for instance, Gutas, 'Avicenna: The Metaphysics of the Rational Soul'.

Al-Masʿūdī initiates his criticism by stating that the doctrine that the human soul is an immaterial and indivisible substance is a widely accepted proposition, which is taught unanimously by ancient and later philosophers and prophetic revelations, and that on the basis of prophetic teachings he assents to the doctrine as a religious belief.[87] There have been attempts, he explains, to support this doctrine with proofs, including Avicenna's proof from the indivisibility of intelligibles, and yet none of the proofs adduced have been apodictic. Al-Masʿūdī concedes that being indivisible, intelligibles cannot become impressed and represented within bodies, because bodies are divisible. He complains, however, that Avicenna's proof hinges on a false premise, namely that perception is, or at least follows from, the impression of the object of perception within the perceiving faculty, which has already been refuted in Section 4 of the *Shukūk*. And if perception neither is, nor presupposes, the impression of the perceived within the perceiver, then it will be possible that the soul is a faculty that subsists in the brain, and that it has the capacity for the different types of sensory perception through specific instruments and the capacity for intellection through itself, either independently or with the assistance of the brain which serves as its subject.

Against the notion that perception is, or requires, impression, al-Masʿūdī reiterates a point he made in Section 4, which is this. I know that the perceiver of all sensibles and intelligibles within me is one. However, if the perception of sensibles requires their presence in the body, and the perception of intelligibles requires their presence in the rational soul, then if I perceive sensibles I will not perceive intelligibles, and if I perceive intelligibles I will not perceive sensibles.[88]

He then considers the argument that knowledge is, without a doubt, an attribute of the knower, and as such must inhere in the knower. If it inheres within the body, the content of the knowledge—that is, the intelligibles—will be divisible. However, since the intelligibles are indivisible, they cannot inhere within the body. Al-Masʿūdī offers two replies.[89] The first is that knowledge is an attribute that does not inhere in the knower in the way that colour or temperature inhere in a body. It is rather a 'state that the knower has in relation to the known', and as such indivisible. He analogises it to fatherhood, which is an attribute that a man has in relation to his son, and hence is indivisible despite the divisibility of his body. The second reply is to grant

87 *Shukūk*, 239–240. The paragraph is translated on p. 80 below.

88 *Shukūk*, 241.

89 *Shukūk*, 242–246.

that knowledge is an attribute that inheres in the knower, without conceding that the divisibility of the substrate of knowledge entails the divisibility of knowledge. For it is arguable that the substrate becomes prepared (*mustaʿidd*) to receive knowledge only when it is combined of specific parts, such that if it loses its combination by undergoing division it immediately loses the preparedness to receive knowledge and with it any knowledge that inhered therein.

Section 6. That Some Existents are beyond the Grasp of the Senses

In *Ishārāt* II.4.1, Avicenna attacks the view that only sensible things exist.[90] He argues that universals exist, but are devoid of any accidents concomitant to sensible things, such as having a specific location or quality. Therefore, universals are not sensible things, but purely intelligible existents. In a very brief response, al-Masʿūdī complains that universal concepts have no extra-mental existence, but are only intelligible to the mind. To say that they 'exist' in the mind—that they have a 'mental existence'—is misleading, and means nothing other than that the mind knows them. What Avicenna intends to establish is that nonsensible things exist in the extra-mental world, yet he fails to achieve this with his proof.[91]

Section 7. Establishing the Existence of the Necessary of Existence and the Finitude of Causes

Discussed in Chapter 5. In *Ishārāt* II.4.9–15, Avicenna proves the existence of the Necessary of Existence through Itself starting from the existence of possible existents.[92] An outline of the argument is provided below, and shall not be reproduced here.[93] Suffice it to say that in the course of the proof, Avicenna opines that if we suppose an infinite series of possible existents, each being an efficient cause that brings the next item in the series into being, the series taken as a whole (*jumla*) will be possible of existence, and hence caused by an efficient cause external to the series.

Al-Masʿūdī attacks the premise that an infinite series constitutes a whole, and hence can be treated as a self-contained set.[94] Being a 'set', and having a 'totality' or a 'whole', are accidents of finite quantities, for they demand that the

90 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 7–9.

91 *Shukūk*, 246–247. On Avicenna's theory of mental existence, see, for instance, Black, 'Mental Existence in Thomas Aquinas and Avicenna'.

92 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 19–27.

93 See Section 5.1.

94 *Shukūk*, 248.

quantity be bounded. An infinite series, however, is not bounded; for wherever we postulate a boundary, there will be further items beyond it belonging to the series. Al-Masʿūdī goes on to point out that, as it happens, Avicenna treats neither the series of beginningless rotations of the celestial spheres, nor the infinite number of human souls in existence, as having a whole, and hence does not infer that since each item comes to be in time the whole must likewise come to be in time. He argues that Avicenna is right not to do so, considering that both cases involve an infinite quantity of items, and therefore do not constitutes wholes. (Of course, this does not imply that al-Masʿūdī accepts either of these two doctrines, which are both tied to the theory that the world is pre-eternal.) To be consistent, Avicenna must concede that an infinite series of causes do not make up a whole.

Section 8. Establishing the Oneness of the Necessary of Existence

In *Ishārāt* II.4.18, Avicenna establishes the uniqueness of the Necessary of Existence through Itself—that is, the doctrine that only one such being exists. He puts forth a proof that commentators interpret in different ways, mainly because it includes an elimination argument whose disjuncts are not set out and eliminated in full.[95] Al-Masʿūdī begins his commentary with the following tidy interpretation of the argument.[96] The Necessary of Existence through Itself is individuated as the unique thing it is either (*a*) because it is necessary of existence, or (*b*) because of some other factor. If the former (*a*), then there obviously cannot be another thing necessary of existence through itself. If the latter (*b*), then either (*b.1*) the individuation of the Necessary of Existence through Itself is concomitant to Its necessity of existence, or (*b.2*) Its individuation is accidental to Its necessity of existence, or (*b.3*) Its necessity of existence is concomitant to Its individuation, or (*b.4*) Its necessity of existence is accidental to Its individuation. The first (*b.1*) clearly entails that only one being necessary of existence through itself exists, which is what the argument seeks to establish. If (*b.2*) necessary existence is accidental to individuation, or (*b.4*) individuation is accidental to necessary existence, then what is acci-

95 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 36–41; cf. al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ*, 2, 263–270; al-Ṭūsī, *Ḥall*, 3, 36–40. Avicenna (*Ishārāt*, 3, 41) concludes the passage by stating, ‘And what remains of the disjuncts is impossible’, which is vague in the extreme. For an interpretation, which generally agrees with al-Ṭūsī, see Mayer, ‘Faḫr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī’s Critique’. I shall not pursue Avicenna’s argument here, as it goes beyond the purposes of the present study and has no bearing on al-Masʿūdī’s criticism.

96 *Shukūk*, 251–252.

dental to the other must depend on a cause, which entails that the Necessary of Existence through Itself is caused. Finally, if (*b.3*) necessity of existence is concomitant to individuation, then it must be caused, though this point is left unsubstantiated. (Al-Rāzī explains that this disjunct implies that the existence of the Necessary of Existence through Itself is posterior to Its essence, which entails the absurd conclusion that the essence must exist before it exists.) After eliminating *b.2*, *b.3* and *b.4*, disjuncts *a* and *b.1* will remain, both of which establish the uniqueness of the Necessary of Existence through Itself. This reading of Avicenna's argument was later developed by both al-Rāzī and al-Ṭūsī, each in his own way.

Having set out the argument, al-Masʿūdī turns to the offensive, his central complaint turning on the terms 'necessary existence' and 'individuation'. Avicenna considers necessary existence to have a distinct and irreducible reality (*amr wujūdī*) over and above existence (*ḥaqīqa muḥaṣṣala thābita warāʾ al-wujūd*). For al-Masʿūdī, however, all that 'necessary existence' means is that an existent does not depend on a cause that produces its existence—that is, an efficient cause.[97] As such, it is nothing but a sheer negation (*salb maḥḍ wa-ʿadam ṣirf*), and has no reality over and above existence. Al-Masʿūdī argues that the same goes for 'individuation', which, quite simply, means that an entity is differentiated from other things, and this does not necessarily require a feature that exists over and above the thing's essence. With these two clarifications, he proposes to leave aside (for the moment) the ambiguous term 'necessary existent', and to reformulate Avicenna's question thus: Why is it impossible that there be two uncaused existents? From this, al-Masʿūdī goes on to argue that if necessary existence is defined negatively, Avicenna's proof will collapse.[98]

In the course of the ensuing discussion, al-Masʿūdī considers the following *reductio* argument.[99] If we postulate two uncaused existents, they must be differentiated from each other. So each is differentiated from the other either by its essence, or by some existent thing that it has over and above its essence. If the former, the existence of each would be accidental to its essence and hence caused. And since an essence cannot cause its own existence, the cause of each of the two existents must be external to it. However, if the latter, then either one or both of the entities would possess something that is superadded to its

97 *Shukūk*, 252–253. Al-Masʿūdī is clearly influenced by al-Ghazālī here (cf. *Tahāfut*, 138–139; 144–145).

98 *Shukūk*, 254.

99 *Shukūk*, 258.

essence; so one or both would be composite, and composite things are caused. Either way, the postulate that the two existents are uncaused does not hold. This argument invokes Avicenna's doctrine of the simplicity of the Necessary of Existence through Itself, according to which It has neither an essence nor other positive attributes over and above its necessary existence. Al-Masʿūdī refers to *Ishārāt* II.4.21–22, where this doctrine is asserted.[100]

At this point, our commentator turns his attention to the Avicennan doctrine of divine simplicity. He refers to, and draws upon, the thorough rebuttal that al-Ghazālī deploys in the *Tahāfut*.[101] Al-Masʿūdī complains that if 'necessary existent' is defined as 'not caused by an efficient cause', the contention, 'If existence is concomitant to an essence it cannot be a necessary existent, i.e. it must be caused', will be a baseless assertion, as it is not substantiated with any proof. All that the proof discussed in Section 7 establishes, assuming it is sound, is the existence of an uncaused existent; but it sheds no light on whether or not this existent has an essence. Along the same lines, he avers that there is no proof that an entity whose existence is uncaused cannot possess an attribute over and above its essence. To describe such an entity as 'composite' will amount to nothing, unless it is shown that either the attribute or the entity's existence is caused. Al-Masʿūdī concludes that there is, in fact, no impossibility that the First Cause (God) has an essence and pre-eternal positive attributes that subsist in His essence, a position that clearly accords with Ashʿarī theology.

Section 9. That the Continued Existence of the Effect Depends on the Continued Existence of Its Cause

Discussed in Chapter 3. In *Ishārāt* II.5.1–3, Avicenna argues that a possible thing depends on its (metaphysical) efficient cause (that is, the cause of its existence), not only for its coming-to-be, but also for its continued existence.[102] In other words, possible existents have no inherent persistence that sustains them in existence after they have come to pass, but must be sustained constantly in existence by an efficient cause. The same view is implied in *Ishārāt* II.4.10.[103] To substantiate his point, Avicenna sets up an elimination argument: a thing that comes to be depends on its cause either (*a*) for its existence, or (*b*) for its

100 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 44–46.

101 *Shukūk*, 259–261; al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, Discussions 5–8, where Avicenna's doctrine of divine uniqueness and simplicity are attacked.

102 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 57–70.

103 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 20.

prior non-existence, or (*c*) for the temporal posteriority of its existence to its nonexistence. He eliminates '*b*' and '*c*', and by doing so establishes '*a*'.[104]

Al-Masʿūdī rejoins that most possible existents do enjoy inherent continued existence, and hence do not need to be sustained in existence by an agent. He makes only two exceptions.[105] Some accidents need to be renewed constantly by a cause, such as motion in space, which needs to be renewed constantly by an inclination (*mayl*) that supervenes on the object. Other accidents are contrary to the nature of the subject in which they inhere, and are sustained by a constant force (*qasr*) applied by an external agent, an example being heat that is forced on water by fire. Yet observation of forced accidents, al-Masʿūdī goes on to argue, will provide confirmation of the central principle, that possible existents continue to exist of themselves, independently of a cause. For instance, when water is removed from the fire, the heat forced upon it will continue to exist for a while, even though its agent has become absent. Al-Masʿūdī then dismisses a possible counter-explanation, namely that even though a form is produced by an agent, it will be preserved in existence by the matter in which it subsists, since matter must always have some form or other. This notion that matter is a preserving cause (*ʿilla mubqiya*) for form is not one that Avicenna holds.[106]

At the end of the section, al-Masʿūdī refutes Avicenna's elimination argument. He has no quarrel with the elimination of disjuncts '*b*' and '*c*', yet he does not concede '*a*', on the grounds that Avicenna omits to consider a fourth disjunct, namely (*d*) that a thing that comes to be depends on an agent on account of the effect's 'coming from nonexistence into existence'. This occurrence, an affection, is what the expression 'coming-to-be' (*ḥudūth*, *ḥuṣūl*) denotes, and it is strictly speaking the effect produced by the agent. As to the realised outcome (*ḥāṣil*) of the affection, it is not dependent on an agent.[107] Al-Masʿūdī concludes that a thing that comes to be depends on its agent only for its coming-to-be, but not for its continued existence, and that coming-to-be cannot endure constantly, as it must be preceded by non-existence. This suggests that the discussion serves as an attack on a cornerstone of the doctrine of the pre-eternity of the world, and a defence of creation *ex nihilo*.

104 For the detailed argument, as well as a discussion of Avicenna's doctrine, its background and its criticism by al-Ghazālī, see Sections 3.1–4 below.

105 *Shukūk*, 262–263.

106 See the discussion on pp. 102–103 below.

107 For more detail on this view and on its possible Māturīdī inspiration, see pp. 104–107 below.

Section 10. That the Possibility of Coming-to-be is an Attribute That Exists prior to Coming-to-be

Discussed in Chapter 4. *Ishārāt* II.5.6 argues that a thing that comes to be (*ḥādith*) must be possible of existence in itself before its coming-to-be; for otherwise it would be impossible of existence. Therefore, this possibility must obtain (*ḥāṣil*), and it can only obtain in a subject.[108] In this way, Avicenna conflates the notion of possibility with the Aristotelian theory of potentiality.[109] As al-Masʿūdī points out at the start of his commentary, by establishing that all that comes to be must be preceded by a substrate and potentiality, Avicenna infers that matter is pre-eternal and consequently that the world is beginningless.

Our commentator queries the contention that a thing that comes to be must be possible of existence before it comes to be.[110] 'Possibility', he argues, is an expression 'common (*mushtarak*) to two meanings'. The first is the metaphysical, *per se* possibility connected to essence; and this possibility is immutable and not dependent on the conditions of any substrates and their receptivity to the possible form. The second is the natural, dispositional preparedness (*istiʿdād*) that a particular substrate possesses to receive a form. Prior to their coming-to-be, things that come to be must be possible in the former sense, but they need not necessarily be possible in the latter sense. Things that come to be in a substrate must indeed be preceded by their preparedness in that substrate. However, things that do not exist in a substrate need not be preceded by preparedness. The obvious implication is that matter can come to be *ex nihilo* (though this raises the problem that the first form to subsist in matter must too come to be *ex nihilo* without being preceded by preparedness, considering that matter cannot exist without form, and that the two must therefore come to be simultaneously).

Concluding the section, al-Masʿūdī praises the 'powerful objections' that al-Ghazālī puts forth in the *Tahāfut* against this Avicennan argument for the pre-eternity of matter. He summarises al-Ghazālī's argument that Avicenna contradicts himself by maintaining that things can only come to be if they are preceded by their possibility-in-matter, and that the human soul comes to be not in a substrate.[111]

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108 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 78–84.

109 For more details on Avicenna's argument and notion of possibility-in-matter, and on al-Ghazālī's criticism, see Sections 4.1–2 below.

110 *Shukūk*, 271–273.

111 *Shukūk*, 273–274. For details, see Section 4.2 below.

Section 11. That from One Only One Effect Can Proceed

In *Ishārāt* II.5.11, Avicenna defends his well-known principle that from a cause that is absolutely one, only one effect can derive.[112] As already mentioned, he appeals to this principle in various contexts in his philosophy, most importantly his Neoplatonic account of the procession of multiple existents from the Necessary of Existence through Itself, which is absolutely simple. Avicenna maintains that being truly one and simple, the First Cause produces only one simple effect, namely the First Intellect. Al-Masʿūdī notes in the conclusion of the *Shukūk* the connection between this doctrine and the theory of the heavenly intellects, which function as mediating causes through the agency of which the sub-lunar world ultimately comes to be.[113]

Avicenna substantiates the principle in question using the following *reductio*. The conception (*mafhūm*) that a thing causes effect A is different from the conception that it causes effect B. If we suppose that a thing C is absolutely one, and yet causes each of A and B, it will have the conception of being the cause of A and the conception of being the cause of B. These two conceptions must be due to C having two distinct aspects (*ḥaythiyya*), each with its own distinct reality, and these two aspects will either be constituents (*muqawwim*) of the essence of C, or concomitants (*lāzim*) to it. If the former, C will be composite, which contradicts the supposition that it is simple. If the latter, the two concomitants will themselves be engendered by two aspects of C, leading to the same contradiction. Therefore, an absolutely simple cause cannot produce more than one simple effect.

Al-Masʿūdī begins by reiterating his criticism of Avicenna's contention that the Necessary of Existence through Itself is absolutely simple. In a passage that strongly echoes the Ashʿarī theory of attributes, he contends that it is not impossible that the Necessary of Existence through Itself has an essence, or that certain attributes subsist in Him.[114]

Al-Masʿūdī then attends to the principle that from one only one derives, and proceeds with a question: Must the effect be one in quantity, or one in kind? If Avicenna intends the former, then his argument fails to exclude the latter. Al-Masʿūdī argues that it is indeed possible, if A and B belong to the same

112 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 97–102; cf. *Ilāhiyyāt*, IX.4, 403–405. On this principle, see, for instance, D'Ancona, *'Ex Uno non fit nisi Unum'*. The principle is refuted in Discussion 3 of al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut* (110 ff.) to make way for the theological doctrine that God creates everything directly.

113 *Shukūk*, 288; p. 50 above.

114 *Shukūk*, 275–276. The passage is translated on p. 36 above.

kind, for C to produce them both by virtue of having only one causative aspect. However, if Avicenna intends the latter, then it will be argued that existence insofar as it is existence is one in kind, though it is numerically multiple purely on account of the multiplicity of individual existents. So it is possible, al-Masʿūdī reasons, for existence to issue from the First and to overflow (*fāḍa*) onto all simple essences, be they intellects or elements, given that all caused things are caused with respect to their existence, but not with respect to their essence. He analogises the process to the light that flows from the sun by the effect of only one aspect thereof—namely, its luminous nature—but is nonetheless received by multiple bodies.

Al-Masʿūdī concludes by advancing an *ad hominem* (*ex concessis*) argument starting from the doctrine of the Active Intellect, to which Avicenna ascribes the provision of substantial and accidental forms to matter. These forms, he opines, are endless in quantity, yet Avicenna would not concede that the Active Intellect possesses an endless number of corresponding aspects. So if Avicenna maintains that the Active Intellect produces multifarious forms without having multiple aspects, then he should concede the possibility that the First Principle overflows existence directly onto all simple essences.

Section 12. That the Activities of Corporeal Powers are Finite

In the course of setting out his emanationist cosmology in *Ishārāt* II.6, Avicenna defends the Aristotelian doctrine that a finite body cannot produce infinite motion, and that since the motion of the heavens is infinite it must have an immaterial mover.[115] Al-Masʿūdī targets the following *reductio ad absurdum* adduced by Avicenna in support of this theory.[116] The motion produced in a body can either be forced upon it by a power external to it, or produced by a power natural and internal to it. Let us suppose that an external power inheres in a given body, and hypothesise that it moves another body B_1 from a certain starting point for an infinite duration of time. B_1 will traverse an infinite distance. Now suppose that the same power moves a smaller body B_2, which is identical in nature to B_1, from the same starting point. Being smaller, B_2 will move faster than B_1, and hence will traverse a longer distance in any given duration. This means that the distance traversed by B_2 must be longer than an infinite distance, which is a contradiction. Therefore, the initial assumption that a body can produce infinite forced motion in another body must be false.

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115 Aristotle, *Physics*, VIII.10. On this doctrine and its reception in late antiquity, see Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, 249 ff.

116 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 165–169.

That a body could be moved infinitely by its own natural power is then excluded along similar lines.[117]

The core of al-Masʿūdī's objection is that being equal to another, or being greater or smaller than another, are accidents of finite quantities.[118] So if two infinite quantities are postulated, they cannot be equal to each other, nor can either of them be smaller or greater than the other. If we juxtapose in the mind two infinite series, neither can be longer than the other, since neither can possibly have an additional quantity over and above the point at which the other terminates.

He then advances an *ad hominem* (*ex concessis*) argument starting from the philosophers' theory that the motions of the celestial spheres are beginningless—a case in which the series is infinite *a parte ante* and finite in the present, rather than finite in the present or at some point in the past and infinite *a parte post* as postulated in the problem at hand.[119] Take, for instance, the motion of the spheres of the moon and Saturn. The former sphere rotates faster than the latter. Avicenna must concede either that the sphere of the moon has rotated more times than the sphere of Saturn, or that it has not rotated more times. If the former, one infinite quantity would be greater than another infinite quantity. If the latter, the difference in the speed of motion between the two spheres will not entail a difference in the quantity of rotations completed during an infinite period of time. Either concession will contradict Avicenna's assertions in the proof under discussion.

Section 13. That the Human Soul is not Affected by the Loss of the Body through Death

At the start of *Ishārāt* II.7, Avicenna advances one of his two arguments for the immortality of the rational soul.[120] He had already established that the soul is not imprinted in the human body, but exists separately from the body and uses it as an instrument, and that the soul has a celestial cause. It follows that the soul survives the corruption of the body. In the following passages (*Ishārāt* II.7.2–4), which al-Masʿūdī targets, Avicenna goes on to argue that the soul's intellectual activity too is not affected by the death of the body.[121] Since intellection is essential to the soul, and since the soul obtains the intelligibles from the

117 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 170–174.

118 *Shukūk*, 280.

119 *Shukūk*, 281.

120 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 241–243.

121 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 244–252.

Active Intellect and not from the body, the death of the body will not adversely affect the soul's intellection. Were intellection dependent on the body, it would deteriorate with the deterioration of the body's health. Avicenna adduces further arguments confirming that though the body is an instrument of the soul, it does not serve as an instrument for the soul's intellection. For instance, as the body ages, its motive and sensory faculties deteriorate, while the intellectual faculty either remains constant or continues to develop. Moreover, intense and persistent activity causes exhaustion to bodily faculties; however, the intellective faculty is not affected in the same way, but often grows stronger with intense and persistent exercise.

In Section 5 of the *Shukūk*, al-Masʿūdī briefly describes these arguments as non-apodictic and merely persuasive.[122] Here, in Section 13, he dismisses as unsubstantiated Avicenna's premise that the deterioration of bodily organs does not bring on intellectual degeneration, and counters that in fact whenever the brain is damaged, the individual's sensory and intellectual perception degenerates, which suggests that the brain is the soul's instrument for intellection.[123] However, even if it is granted that intellection, as Avicenna asserts, is essential to the soul and not a function of the body, it can still be claimed that the brain serves as a subject in which the soul inheres. The soul, accordingly, would be corrupted with the corruption of the body.

Section 14. That the Human Soul Cannot Possibly Pass Away

Discussed in Chapter 4. In *Ishārāt* II.7.6, Avicenna argues that the human soul is incorruptible in itself. The argument is basically this. A corruptible thing must consist of two principles, one that provides it with actuality as the thing it is, and another that provides it with the potentiality to pass away, i.e. to be replaced with something else. Therefore, since the human soul is self-subsistent and not a compound of two principles, it is incorruptible.[124]

Al-Masʿūdī raises two complaints. The first is that Avicenna's argument is premised on the principle that occurrences must be preceded by possibility-in-matter, which was already refuted in Section 10. The second is the following *ad hominem* argument. The possibility of the coming-to-be of the human soul either inheres in a substrate (in which case, the substrate must be the body), or does not inhere in a substrate. If the former, then the possibility of the passing-away of the human soul too may inhere in the human body. If the latter, then

122 *Shukūk*, 239–240.

123 *Shukūk*, 282–283.

124 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 261–264. For details, see Section 4.4 below.

it will be possible for the soul to pass away, without this possibility having to inhere in a body. Either way, the human soul is corruptible.

***Section 15.* [*The Knowledge that the Necessary of Existence Has of Itself and of Things Other than Itself*]**

The concluding section is only given a number, but not a substantive title. It begins by citing *Ishārāt* II.7.15 and II.7.21, and then highlights three Avicennan views concerning the knowledge of the Necessary of Existence through Itself.[125] Al-Masʿūdī does not discuss any, but only refers to al-Ghazālī's refutations in the *Tahāfut*.[126] Here is a full translation of his commentary:

> These [two passages submit] three claims. The first is that [the Necessary of Existence] knows Itself. The second is that It knows [things] other than Itself. The third is that It does not know particular things, except in a universal way. Concerning each of these [claims], there are powerful objections (*shukūk*) and serious problems (*ishkālāt*). The Imām al-Ghazālī—may he be blissful, and may God sanctify his noble soul—provided these in the *Tahāfut* in a way that cannot be matched, and there is hence no point in reproducing them here. Whoever wishes to acquaint himself with them must read that book; for all that is found in that source is precious.[127]

2.4 Interpretation: Al-Masʿūdī's Philosophical Theology

The preface and conclusion of the *Shukūk* quoted and discussed in Section 2.2 above leave unanswered a few questions concerning what the author endeavours to achieve in his book, especially as they should not readily be taken at face value, as noted. So we should hone in on our text, and try to assess the overall thrust and objectives of the criticisms it deploys against the *Ishārāt*. What is al-Masʿūdī's 'agenda', so to speak? And does this agenda have more in common with al-Ghazālī's critical theology, or with Abū l-Barakāt's critical philosophy?[128]

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125 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 278; 3, 295–296.

126 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 210–238.

127 *Shukūk*, 287. The concluding statement is an Arabic proverb that cannot be rendered literally.

128 It is worth pointing out here that al-Masʿūdī composed the *Shukūk* before meeting al-Rāzī and most probably before reading any of his works. So we can immediately discount the

To begin with, al-Masʿūdī's conceptual toolkit is thoroughly philosophical, including where his own views are expressed. From the preceding synopsis, it is obvious that he subscribes, for example, to the theories of hylomorphism, universal essences, natural causality and the rational soul, theories which are almost never tolerated in classical *kalām* sources on account of their direct conflict with the theologians' atomism and occasionalism. What is more, there is a conspicuous absence in the *Shukūk* of any of the conceptual vocabulary of *kalām*. For example, al-Masʿūdī uses the terms 'First Principle' and 'Necessary of Existence through Itself' repeatedly, but nowhere any of the more religious appellations of the deity such as 'God' (*Allāh*) or 'Creator' (*khāliq*, *bāriʾ*), except in formulae. Likewise, instead of 'creation' (*khalq*), he uses 'procession' (*ṣudūr*) and 'overflowing' (*fayḍ*), though whether the commentator is genuinely committed to these notions or only employs them for dialectical expediency is far from certain.[129] Despite its thoroughly philosophical conceptual vocabulary, the book exhibits much of the non-conceptual, dialectical vocabulary and argumentative structure and tactics characteristic of earlier *kalām*, most obviously the question-and-answer format ('If they say …, we say …', *in qālū … qulnā …*).

Yet al-Masʿūdī's conceptual vocabulary is only one part of the story. What he does with it is another matter. And it seems to me that the problems treated in the *Shukūk* fall into three classes—natural philosophy and mathematics, the ontology of the human soul, and metaphysics—and that each of these classes exhibits its own distinct motivating objectives.

1. Natural philosophy and mathematics. The first class includes discussions that fall under, or are closely linked to, physics and mathematics, specifically Sections 1–4.[130] These discussions have a twofold background. First, they tie in with al-Masʿūdī's career in the sciences, particularly the mathematical sciences, which has already been highlighted in Chapter 1.[131] Most notably, his expertise in geometry and geometrical optics comes to the fore in Section 2 of the *Shukūk* and in the discussion of vision in Section 4. Second, discussions of natural philosophy in the book bespeak the influence of Abū l-Barakāt's *Muʿtabar*,

possibility that he was in any way either influenced by his younger contemporary, or responding to him.

129 With one exception: life is 'created' in a foetus (*Shukūk*, 208).

130 Although Avicenna considers Problems 1 and 2 to belong properly to metaphysics, they concern principles of natural philosophy, which is why he covers these problems alongside other physical topics, at the beginning of the second part of the *Ishārāt* (cf. Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.I.2, 13–26).

131 See Sections 1.2–3.

which is cited explicitly no less than three times in Section 4. The first citation highlights his opposition to a widely accepted Avicennan position, and runs as follows:

> The view that perceivers divide into bodily ones, which only perceive sensible objects, and non-bodily ones, which only perceive intelligibles, is a widely accepted view received on authority (*mashhūr maqbūl*) and agreed upon by the majority. The only one to go against this is the most excellent person of our time, whom God favoured with a superior [skill for] research and inquiry, the author of the *Muʿtabar*, may God reward his deeds and recompense him well. If you apply an impartial method, abandon prejudice and partisanship, and give reasoned consideration to the different doctrines, you will know that his is the correct position.[132]

Abū l-Barakāt's influence is also palpable in Section 1 of the *Shukūk*, as we shall see in Chapter 6 below. Going further, al-Rāzī remarks in the preface to his *Jawābāt* that most of al-Masʿūdī's criticisms are borrowed from Abū l-Barakāt, but this seems an exaggeration.[133]

None of the discussions of natural philosophy in the *Shukūk* are motivated by direct or explicit theological concerns, and only one, to my mind, may have an indirect and unstated theological objective. In Section 4, which focuses on human perception, al-Masʿūdī assigns all types of perception to the rational soul and externalises the process of sensory perception such that objects are perceived in the external world and not within the perceiver.[134] Perception, accordingly, consists not of the representation of the object perceived within the perceiver, but instead of a relation that the perceiver has to the external object. Abū l-Barakāt appeals to this theory of perception to establish, in opposition to Avicenna, that God knows particular things without undergoing change or requiring bodily organs, a position that Ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī responds to in defence of the Avicennan thesis together with its underpinning theory of perception.[135] Though he does not indicate the theological relevance of his

132 *Shukūk*, 215.

133 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 11; cf. 19; 29; 39; 49. On al-Rāzī's remarks on the sources of the *Shukūk*, see Shihadeh, 'Al-Rāzī's Response', 4.

134 See pp. 64–65 above.

135 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 3, 69 ff. Al-Sāwī (*Nahj al-taqdīs*, 31) responds to Abū l-Barakāt's views as reported in an unidentified epistle penned by a contemporary, which suggests that he did not have access to the *Muʿtabar*.

own discussion of perception, al-Masʿūdī is likely to have intended it ultimately as a response to such defences of the Avicennan position, probably even to al-Sāwī's *Nahj al-taqdīs* specifically, to lend support to the doctrine that God knows particulars. His espousal of this doctrine is declared in Section 15 of the *Shukūk*.

2. The ontology of the soul. The second class includes discussions of the ontology of the human soul, more specifically its immateriality and immortality. These are Sections 5, 13 and 14, though Section 3 may also be included. In my view, these discussions are motivated in the first place by considerations of theological epistemology, which al-Masʿūdī declares in Section 5 where he remarks on the doctrine of the immateriality of the human soul as follows:

> This is a widely accepted proposition, which is agreed upon by both ancient and later [philosophers], taught in all true religions, and made known through revelation and the light of prophecy to prophets and messengers, the blessings of God be upon them all, who informed us of the survival of [the soul] after death. An accident does not continue to exist after the passing away of the substrate; [therefore, the soul is not an accident, but a substance]. So we have accepted this from them by way of faith in the Unseen, assent and belief (*īmānan bi-l-ghayb wa-taṣdīqan wa-iʿtiqādan*), having devotionally subscribed to their teachings, peace be upon them.[136]

He avers that the proofs adduced for this doctrine by those who search out the realities of things and strive to rise above traditional belief (*taqlīd*) are all non-apodictic, and he goes on to argue that this is true of the Avicennan proof under discussion. What this reveals is that al-Masʿūdī follows earlier theologians, including al-Ghazālī, in maintaining (1) that the nature of the human soul is unknowable to the mind and can only be established through prophetic revelation, which presupposes that revelation provides knowledge of certain 'unseen' things that are otherwise unknowable, and (2) that since the soul, as revelation teaches, survives the death of the body and continues to exist separately from it, it must be a substance rather than an accident.[137] Follow-

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136 *Shukūk*, 239–240.

137 On both points, see Shihadeh, 'Classical Ashʿarī Anthropology', 465 ff. So al-Masʿūdī's epistemological stance goes back ultimately to classical *kalām*, and pertains primarily (or, as far as the problems treated in the *Shukūk* are concerned, *exclusively*) to the ontological

ing al-Ghazālī's model, however, he maintains that the soul is an immaterial substance, rather than a 'subtle body' embedded in the human body, as some earlier Ashʿarīs opined.[138] It is safe to assume that the same epistemological stance elicits al-Masʿūdī's confutation of Avicenna's arguments for the immortality of the soul in Sections 13 and 14, and is possibly at play in Section 3, which targets Avicenna's argument that the soul is different from the temperament.

3. Metaphysics. The third class of discussions includes Sections 6–12 and 15, which concern metaphysical problems, especially problems concerning the nature of the First Cause, cosmogony and cosmology. Although at first glance these appear to reflect the same overall critical outlook that motivates sections on physics and mathematics, on closer inspection a different underlying narrative emerges, which resonates with the theological perspective already encountered at the beginning of Section 5. The most conspicuous clue lies in the following references made to al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*, the only source other than Abū l-Barakāt cited in the *Shukūk*. In the first, al-Masʿūdī introduces as follows a response evoked by an Avicennan argument: 'The response (*jawāb*) to this is what the Imām al-Ghazālī—may he be blissful and may his soul be sanctified—provided in the *Tahāfut* and set out in a most superlative manner'.[139] In the second, he references the same source, this time to support his own line of criticism:

> All of this [i.e. al-Masʿūdī's own criticisms of Avicenna] finds support in what the Imām al-Ghazālī—may he be blissful—provided in the *Tahāfut* in response (*radd*) to their [i.e. the philosophers'] views on this question. They are all potent objections (*ishkālāt*), and very much on target.[140]

The final reference occurs in Section 15, a very short section which I have already cited in full.[141] Obviously, therefore, the *Tahāfut* had a decisive effect on the metaphysical discussions in the *Shukūk*. A direct Ghazālian influence

status of the soul. I should add that I do not subscribe to the view that al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut* is largely motivated by the conviction that reason cannot arrive at truth without the aid of revelation. This question, however, goes beyond the purview of the present study and demands a separate treatment.

138 Some earlier Ashʿarīs believed the soul to be an accident. See Shihadeh, 'Classical Ashʿarī Anthropology', 465 ff. On al-Ghazālī's views, see Shihadeh, 'Al-Ghazālī and *Kalām*'.

139 *Shukūk*, 259.

140 *Shukūk*, 273.

141 See p. 78 above.

is detectable even in metaphysical discussions in which the *Tahāfut* is not cited—for instance, in Sections 7, 9 and 14, as the case studies conducted in the following chapters will illustrate. This is hardly surprising, as we have already established al-Masʿūdī's broader intellectual debt to al-Ghazālī on the basis of sources other than the *Shukūk*, most notably al-Rāzī, Ibn Ghaylān and al-Masʿūdī's own *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*.[142]

Yet the Ghazālian impact on the *Shukūk* is not confined to the specific arguments reproduced or developed by al-Masʿūdī, but informs the very 'agenda' of the book. We have already seen that in *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba* he exhibits a keen interest in theological themes, although there he commits himself to a neutral and expository reading of the main text. A similar focus on theological questions is attested in the choice of metaphysical problems attended to in the *Shukūk*, though now Avicenna's doctrines are treated critically, the overall thrust of the criticisms being to sustain competing theological positions. Although the underlying theological commitments and motives are not declared openly in any metaphysical discussions, they are unmistakable. In Sections 8 and 11, al-Masʿūdī attacks Avicenna's doctrine of God's absolute simplicity, and argues instead that it is possible that He has an essence and (as Ashʿarīs hold) attributes over and above His essence.[143] In Sections 9 and 10, he criticises two prime underpinnings of the theory of the pre-eternity of the world, and champions antitheses each of which entails that the world is created in time, *ex nihilo*. In Section 11, al-Masʿūdī complains against the principle that the First Cause produces only one effect, on which Avicenna's account of the Neoplatonic theory of emanation is premised, and he submits the alternative thesis that the First Principle could confer existence on all possible things directly. His disapproval of Avicenna's cosmogony finds expression also in the conclusion of the *Shukūk*, cited previously. Yet perhaps the most telling indication of the commentator's theological motives lies in Section 15, quoted above, where he simply refers us to al-Ghazālī's refutations of Avicenna's views on God's knowledge in Discussions 11–13 of the *Tahāfut*.[144] This reference evinces an acceptance of the upshots of al-Ghazālī's refutations, most notably the theological tenet that God knows particulars. With its criticisms of metaphysical doctrines evidently intended to lend credence to certain widely held theological views, the *Shukūk* displays some of the hallmarks of al-Ghazālī's critical and dialectical style of theology, which underlies the latter's criticism of Avicennan

142 See Section 1.4 above.

143 See pp. 69–70 and 74 above.

144 See p. 78 above.

philosophy in defence of the orthodox creed. Yet, in sharp contrast to al-Ghazālī and Ibn Ghaylān, al-Masʿūdī undertakes his criticism of Avicennan doctrines in a much more restrained manner, nowhere declaring any religious motives nor partaking in anti-Avicennan polemic.

The fact that a theological undercurrent is detectable in the *Shukūk* mainly in discussions of metaphysics and the ontology of the soul, more so than in discussions of other branches of natural philosophy and mathematics, also corresponds, to a degree, to the Ghazālian *kalām* project epitomised in the *Tahāfut*. Al-Ghazālī directs his attention primarily to critiquing doctrines of metaphysics and human ontology (to which he dedicates, respectively, sixteen discussions and three discussions), and much less so to other areas of natural philosophy (which receive only one discussion, namely Discussion 17, on causation, which in fact is highly pertinent to theology), because, as he writes, the bulk of the philosophers' metaphysical doctrines are false, whereas the bulk of their natural philosophy is acceptable. In his view, the majority of the philosophers' physical theories and almost the entirety of their mathematical theories, just like medicine, are sound and do not clash with the teachings of revelation.[145] This broad assessment in effect gives a green light to a more positive partaking in philosophical physics and mathematics; and, to my mind, it is this outlook that explains the absence of theological motives, direct or indirect, in some sections on physics and mathematics in the *Shukūk*.

In view of this Ghazālian influence, should we class the *Shukūk* as a *Tahāfut*-style work, without the rough edges? I am inclined to think not, as fundamental differences exist between al-Masʿūdī and his predecessor. The *Tahāfut* is a large-scale refutation executed very much from the perspective of an 'outsider', albeit one who avowedly is willing to take onboard whatever philosophical views prove sound and worthy. It is fixed exclusively on refutation, as al-Ghazālī generally abstains in this book from the more constructive business of establishing the Sunni creed (*ʿaqīdat ahl al-sunna*, as he calls it) or any other positive doctrines. The latter task is assigned to other works, such as the *Iqtiṣād*, a *kalām* manual.[146] In contrast, the *Shukūk* offers an 'insider', philosophical critique of a philosophical system. As an aporetic text, al-Masʿūdī's work displays greater precision and selectiveness in the Avicennan views it targets, and the criti-

145 Al-Ghazālī, *Maqāṣid*, 3; *Munqidh*, 79–85. Al-Ghazālī also explains that the philosophers' logic is mostly correct.

146 On al-Ghazālī's view that the principal objective of *kalām* is to defend the Sunni creed, see his *Munqidh*, 71–72. For earlier Ashʿarīs, by contrast, the objective of *kalām* is both to *establish* and to defend the creed.

cisms it deploys are much more pinpoint in scope and implications. What is more, al-Masʿūdī counters many Avicennan doctrines by submitting and sometimes defending views of his own. These, for the most part, concur with widely held religious doctrines, but are nonetheless formulated and justified in wholly philosophical terms. (By 'religious doctrine' here, I mean the skeletal Sunni creed, as understood by al-Ghazālī, abstracted from the theoretical exposition and defence that surrounds it in *kalām*.[147]) Therefore, the metaphysical discussions of the *Shukūk* can be read as being attempts to develop philosophical formulations of certain central creeds that were previously couched in the framework of *kalām*. They are evidence of a nascent philosophical theology, which, to an extent, was still inchoate and unsystematic. That the big question of whether philosophy and revelation are, or can be, in agreement (*muwāfaqa*) is likely to have been at the back of al-Masʿūdī's mind when he wrote the *Shukūk* is already suggested by the fact that this question motivates his commentary on Avicenna's *Khuṭba*, as we have seen. The latter text tries to show, through exegesis, how Avicennan philosophy is in harmony with the teachings of revelation, though the commentator, of course, is noncommittal about the contents of his book. The *Shukūk* seems motivated, in part, by the same basic conviction that philosophy need not clash with the teachings of revelation, but it pursues this objective by critiquing aspects of Avicennan philosophy and proposing alternative philosophical theories and arguments.

147 Cf. Ibn Khaldūn's distinction between religious doctrines (*al-ʿaqāʾid al-īmāniyya*) and the rational proofs (*dalīl ʿaqlī*, *ḥujja ʿaqliyya*) adduced by theologians (Shihadeh, 'Argument from Ignorance', 218).

CHAPTER 3

Efficient Causation and Continued Existence: Problem 9

In Section 9 of the *Shukūk*, al-Masʿūdī targets a theory that serves as one of the cornerstones of Avicenna's cosmology and cosmogony. The commentary takes its cue initially from *Ishārāt* II.4.10, which occurs in the context of Avicenna's proof for the existence of the Necessary of Existence through Itself, but it then turns to *Ishārāt* II.5.1–3, where the theory is set out in detail. The question at issue concerns, in the first place, both the process of efficient causation and the mode of existence that possible existents are possessed of, more particularly the problem of whether an effect depends on its agent with respect to its coming-to-be or its existence *per se*. This metaphysical problem is of central importance in both classical *kalām* and Avicenna, who, as we shall see, frames his discussion in the *Ishārāt* first and foremost as a response to the theologians' conception of agency, and presents his own position as antithetical to theirs. The problem has broader implications, with the theologians' position being inextricably linked to their theory of creation *ex nihilo*, and Avicenna's to his theory that the world is pre-eternal.

3.1 The Classical *Kalām* Background

One of the key precepts of classical *kalām* is that an effect depends on (*iḥtāja ilā*) its agent only for its coming-to-be (*ḥudūth*), but not for its continued existence (*baqāʾ*).[1] This is what the theologians would class as a 'principle', or a 'primary doctrine' (*aṣl*), on which one or more 'secondary doctrines' (*farʿ*) are premised. This primary doctrine finds its chief application in the classical-*kalām* cosmological proofs of the existence of God starting from creation *ex nihilo*; and it is in this context that the doctrine is normally substantiated. The Bahshamī Muʿtazila—the followers of Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī (d. 321/933)—and classical Ashʿarīs developed radically different proofs. Both, however, started by positing the same central question: Why does an entity that comes

1 For a fuller exploration of the theological background, see my forthcoming article 'Metaphysical Causality, Contingency and Coming-to-be'.

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to be (*ḥādith*) require another entity to originate it (*muḥdith*)? In what follows, I shall only examine the standard Bahshamī proof, as I argue that it became Avicenna's prime target of criticism.[2]

The Bahshamīs prove the existence of God by means of an analogy (*qiyās*) starting from the view that human acts (*fiʿl*) are entities—specifically accidents—which come to be either in the agent's body or in other bodies. An act-entity, they argue, depends on (*iḥtāja ilā*) its agent (*fāʿil*). For instance, every time I act or refrain from acting, I do so in accordance with the presence or absence of prior motives and counter-motives corresponding to my act or abstention; this attests that my acts are necessarily dependent on my motives, and consequently on me as an agent.[3] In the schema of the analogy, the act-entity is said to be the primary case (*aṣl*), and its dependence on its agent is thus said to be a judgement (*ḥukm*) that applies to it. This judgement is then explained as being caused by a determinant (*ʿilla*), which is a specific attribute of the act-entity. The Bahshamīs use several arguments to identify this determinant, which is argued to be the same for all act-entities, since they are all equally dependent on their agents. One example is the following disjunction-and-elimination argument: the attribute in question must either be the act-entity's continuous existence (*istimrār al-wujūd*), or its prior nonexistence, or its coming-to-be. The first disjunct is eliminated on the grounds that acts often outlast their agents, and hence cannot depend on them continually. The construction of a building involves the production of accidents of composition between its constituent parts, and these accidents will continue to exist long after the death of their agent, the builder. The second disjunct is obviously false, as nonexistence, even when it precedes an entity's existence, is clearly nothing, and hence cannot be a cause for anything. It follows that the third disjunct must be true, and that an act-entity depends on its agent precisely with respect to the act-entity's coming-to-be. It is the entity's coming-to-be, rather than its continued existence, that is caused by the agent.[4] Once the determinant has been established in the primary case, it can subsequently be used analogically to establish whether the same judgement applies to the secondary case (*farʿ*), which, in the problem at hand, is specifically the case of temporally originated entities that are not produced by humans. Since these entities come to be, they too must depend on an agent, who is argued to be a pre-eternal creator.

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2 On the Ashʿarī argument, see my forthcoming 'Metaphysical Causality, Contingency and Coming-to-be'.

3 Ibn Mattawayh, *Majmūʿ*, 1, 69–72.

4 Mānkdīm, *Sharḥ*, 119; Ibn Mattawayh, *Majmūʿ*, 1, 73.

Another application of the principle, that an entity that comes to be depends on its agent only with respect to its coming-to-be, occurs in discussions of the continued existence of created entities. The flipside of the principle is that if an entity is of a type that has a capacity for continued existence (*istimrār al-wujūd*), or persistence (*baqāʾ*), its continued existence, once it comes to be, will be self-sustaining and uncaused. According to Bahshamīs, certain classes of created beings enjoy continued existence, in particular atoms and specific classes of accidents, such as accidents of colour, life and composition. Such beings depend on their agents, strictly speaking, only for their coming-to-be, but they then continue to exist autonomously, independent of an agent. A case in point is the accident of composition produced by a builder between the bricks of a building, which continues to exist even after the builder has died or become incapacitated.[5] Certain other accident classes, such as the accidents of pain and sound, do not persist, so when such an accident comes to be, it will exist for a single moment and pass away. When such an accident appears to persist for an extended duration, the observer is given this impression only because a series of discrete instances of the same accident come to be uninterrupted at successive moments.[6]

In classical Ashʿarism, all accidents without exception lack persistence and last no more than an instant. The colour of an object, hence, is recreated directly by God at each moment (*taḥduthu ḥālan baʿda ḥāl*).[7] Al-Juwaynī maintained that atoms persist in existence so long as they contained instances of certain classes of accidents.[8]

The doctrine that an effect depends on its cause solely with respect to its coming-to-be is of far-reaching significance in earlier theology, as it underpins the macrostructure—so to speak—of the classical-*kalām* worldview, with God as a pre-eternal voluntary agent, on the one hand, and the world as His temporally created act, on the other. According to this same principle, the philosophical notion that the world is pre-eternal, and hence did not come to be at some point in the past, immediately implies that, like God, it is uncaused (not to mention, of course, that it contradicts scriptural conceptions of creation, as theologians argued). Avicenna is keenly aware of the centrality of this theological doctrine, and for this reason gives considerable attention to refuting it and to advocating the antithetical doctrine that an effect depends on its agent only for its continued existence, and not for its coming-to-be.

5 Ibn Mattawayh, *Tadhkira*, 1, 68.

6 Ibn Mattawayh, *Tadhkira*, 1, 149–152; 1, 174.

7 Al-Anṣārī, *Ghunya*, 2, 684.

8 Al-Juwaynī, *Shāmil*, 160.

3.2 Avicenna's Theory of Efficient Causation

Turning now to Avicenna, we must start with his account of efficient causation. While Aristotle defines 'efficient cause' as 'the primary cause of change or rest', Avicenna distinguishes between two types of efficient causes (*ʿilla fāʿiliyya*), or agents (*fāʿil*).[9] He writes:

> … Metaphysical philosophers do not mean by 'agent' only the principle of motion, as the naturalists mean, but the principle and giver of existence, as in the case of the Creator with respect to the world. As for the natural efficient cause, it does not bestow any existence other than motion in one of the forms of motion. Thus, in the natural sciences, that which bestows existence is a principle of motion.[10]

Metaphysical efficient causes, according to Avicenna, are causes that confer existence on things other than themselves, whereas natural (*ṭabīʿī*) efficient causes (corresponding to Aristotle's efficient causes) only produce motion in existent things, which can be in the categories of quantity, quality, place or position. Avicenna accordingly describes metaphysical efficient causes as 'true' (*ḥaqīqī*) efficient causes.[11] God, the Necessary of Existence through Itself, confers existence on all beings and thus can be said to be their ultimate metaphysical efficient cause. The Giver of Forms is the metaphysical efficient cause of forms, which give actual existence to matter when they are combined with it.

In contrast to causes of existence, natural efficient causes are, in one respect, not true and essential (*bi-l-dhāt*) efficient causes, but only have an accidental (*bi-l-ʿaraḍ*) and auxiliary (*muʿīn*) activity.[12] As a principle of motion, a natural efficient cause prepares (*muʿidd*, *muhayyiʾ*) matter to receive a new form, and it does so by effecting motion therein. Another, metaphysical efficient

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9 Aristotle, *Physics*, II.3; *Metaphysics*, V 2. The following reading of Avicenna's theory of efficient causality is, in key respects, my own (see my forthcoming article 'Metaphysical Causality, Contingency and Coming-to-be'). On this subject, see also Richardson, 'Avicenna's Conception of the Efficient Cause'; Marmura, 'The Metaphysics of Efficient Causality in Avicenna'; Wisnovksy, 'Final and Efficient Causality in Avicenna's Cosmology and Theology'; McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 192–195.

10 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, VI.1, 257 (Marmura's translation, 195, with slight adjustment).

11 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, VI.2, 265.

12 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, VI.2, 265. On essential and accidental causes, see *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.I.12, 74–75; *Najāt*, 521. On auxiliary causes, see *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.I.10, 65.

cause—namely, the Giver of Forms—completes (*mutammim*) the process by producing the new form in matter, when it has obtained a complete disposition (*istiʿdād tāmm*) for that form.[13] Avicenna explains that the father is not the real cause for the existence of the son, but only the cause for producing the motion that delivers semen to the mother's womb. The true cause that confers form on matter to produce the son is the Giver of Forms. Likewise, when a builder constructs a building, the motions of his body only produce motions in bricks and mortar, which is a motion in the category of place. The real cause of the combination (*ijtimāʿ*) of these things, and consequently of the shape of the building and its existence as a building, is again the Giver of Forms, rather than the builder.[14]

According to Avicenna, a metaphysical efficient cause must be simultaneous with its effect (*al-ʿilal al-ḥaqīqiyya mawjūda maʿa l-maʿlūl*).[15] This means that the agent does not precede its effect temporally, and moreover that an effect that continues to exist after it has come to be does not become self-necessitating, but must be sustained in existence constantly by an agent.[16] This view is central to Avicenna's cosmology, and in the *Najāt* it is substantiated in a lengthy argument that appears in the context of proving the existence of the Necessary of Existence through Itself.[17] In brief, the argument is that since the possibility of a possible thing is linked to its essence, it is not only possible before it comes to be, but remains possible after it comes to be and throughout its continued existence. Avicenna writes:

> Every thing that comes to be has a cause for its coming-to-be, and a cause for its continued existence (*thabāt*). The two may be one and the same thing, as in the case of a vessel that confers shape on a body of water. Or they may be two different things, such as the form of a statue, which is produced by an artisan and sustained (*thabata*) by the dryness of the substance of the element from which it is made. It is impossible for a thing that comes to be to become, after it has come to be, continually existing by itself such that it becomes, once it has come to be, necessary

13 Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.I.10, 65. We return to Avicenna's conception of preparedness in the next chapter.

14 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, VI.2, 264–265.

15 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, VI.2, 265.

16 For the Neoplatonic background of Avicenna's theory of constant, eternal creation, see Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, 249 ff.; Kukkonen, 'Creation and Causation', 239 ff.

17 Avicenna, *Najāt*, 571–576.

> of existence and such that it continues to exist independently of a cause for its existence and continued existence.[18]

So, if a possible thing comes to be, it does not become necessary through itself, but will be necessitated by an agent so long as that agent exists. Therefore, the continued existence of the effect depends on the continued existence of an agent that continues to necessitate it (and it may or may not be the original cause of its coming-to-be).

As to natural efficient causes, Avicenna writes in some places that these 'precede' (*mutaqaddim*) their effects; but this should not be taken at face value, for in the final analysis they too in fact must be simultaneous with their effects. A natural efficient cause is simultaneous with the motion it produces, which strictly speaking is its true effect. This motion, which of course takes place in time, may eventually engender preparedness in a substrate to receive a new form, which will then come to be and may subsequently continue to exist. The true agent of this new form will be a metaphysical efficient cause, rather than the cause of motion. So, a natural cause is simultaneous with its true effect, which is motion, but it precedes the effect to which it serves only as an accidental or auxiliary cause, which is the form.[19]

There may seem to be exceptions to the rule. For instance, if I throw a stone, my moving arm will be the agent for the forced motion (*ḥaraka qasriyya*) produced in the stone while it is still in my hand; however, the stone will continue to move after I release it. So the motion of the stone continues after it becomes separated from the external force exerted by its agent. For Avicenna, however, there is more to the process than meets the eye:

> Forced motion may [continue to] exist separately from the mover [i.e. when the mobile is separate from the mover], even though the mover's production of the motion has ceased. Now, it is impossible that the motion that is continuously being renewed should exist while its cause does not exist. So there must be some cause that preserves the motion, and that cause will exist in the mobile, producing an effect on it.[20]

Avicenna explains the continued motion of the stone after it separates from the hand by appealing to his theory of inclination (*mayl*), understood as an

18 Avicenna, *Najāt*, 572.

19 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, VI.2, 264–265.

20 Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.II.8, 194–195 (partly based on McGinnis's translation).

accidental power that occurs in the moving object and causes its motion.[21] A stone, consisting predominantly of earth, has a natural inclination for downward motion, but if I throw it upwards, my arm will generate a foreign (*gharīb*) forced inclination (*mayl qasrī*) in the object. This forced inclination will move it while it is in my hand. After I release the stone, the forced inclination continues to exist for a while in it and to cause its continued forced motion, until this foreign inclination is overcome by the stone's natural inclination or some other foreign force (for instance, if the object hits the ceiling) and is ultimately replaced with a different inclination.[22] So, the continued motion of the stone will be caused continuously by its true and immediate agent, which is the inclination that inheres therein. 'It is impossible', Avicenna writes, 'that what arrives at a given end point [of motion] should do so without some [continually] existing cause that makes it arrive', i.e. a cause that exists throughout the motion. The cause in question is the inclination that supervenes upon the object.[23] Inclination is thus the 'natural efficient cause' of the stone's motion ('natural', in opposition to 'metaphysical', rather than in opposition to 'forced'). Avicenna would say that the mover's arm, in turn, acts as another natural efficient cause, which produces preparedness in the matter of the stone to receive a foreign inclination, and that this inclination then comes to be through the agency of the Active Intellect, which acts as its metaphysical efficient cause and sustains it continuously in existence as long as there is preparedness in the matter of the moving object.

In the Metaphysics of the *Shifāʾ*, Avicenna argues against the three interconnected *kalām* views that the agent precedes its effect, that it only causes the coming-to-be (*ḥudūth*) of the effect, and that the continued existence (*baqāʾ*) of the effect is hence uncaused and independent of the cause of its coming-to-be.[24] He argues that the agent only causes the existence of the effect, and hence that the effect's coming-to-be, which denotes the fact that its existence was preceded by nonexistence, is strictly speaking uncaused. For, firstly, the prior nonexistence of the effect is not caused, except in the privative sense of being due to the absence of an efficient cause. Secondly, the fact that existence is temporally posterior to nonexistence too is not caused; for the existence of a temporally originated entity cannot possibly be except after nonexistence,

21 On Avicenna's theory of inclination, see Hasnawi, 'La Dynamique D' Ibn Sīnā'; McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 79–84.

22 Avicenna, *Tabīʿiyyāt*, I.IV.8, 460–462.

23 Avicenna, *Tabīʿiyyāt*, I.IV.8, 460.

24 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, VI.1–2, 259 ff.

and what is not possible, but necessary, cannot be caused. The existence of the effect, by contrast, is possible and hence caused.[25]

3.3 Avicenna's Criticism of *Kalām* in the *Ishārāt*

This brings us to *Ishārāt* II.5.1–3, which bears some correspondence to the discussion in the *Shifāʾ*, just described.[26] In these first three sections of Chapter 5 of the Physics and Metaphysics, titled 'On demiurgy and [atemporal] creation' (*fī l-ṣunʿ wa-l-ibdāʿ*), Avicenna frames his theory of metaphysical efficient causation against the backdrop of the foregoing theological, particularly Bahshamī, doctrines. In his full commentary on the *Ishārāt*, al-Rāzī insightfully groups the three Avicennan sections under one heading: 'On that the determinant for dependence on a cause is possibility, rather than coming-to-be, and that during its continued existence a thing is not independent of a cause' (*fī anna ʿillat al-ḥāja ilā l-muʾaththir hiya l-imkān lā l-ḥudūth, wa-anna l-shayʾ ḥāl baqāʾi-hi lā yastaghnī ʿan al-sabab*).[27]

In the first section (*Ishārāt* II.5.1), labelled a 'false notion' (*wahm*), Avicenna provides an account of the belief, held by 'ordinary people' (*ʿāmma*), that the effect depends (*taʿalluq*) on its agent precisely because the former was initially non-existent and then obtained its existence from the latter.[28] That is to say, the two are connected purely on account of the effect's coming-to-be, although Avicenna does not mention the term '*ḥudūth*' here. This conception of causation is intended in such expressions as 'to produce' (*awjada*), 'to make' (*ṣanaʿa*) and 'to act' (*faʿala*) when used by ordinary people, that is, when they are employed in their ordinary, lexical senses. Such an understanding of agency is associated with '*awhām ʿāmmiyya*', i.e. it consists of an 'estimative proposition' (*wahmiyya*) stemming from the estimative faculty of the mind, which holds sway over the worldview of ordinary people.[29] Avicenna observes that, according to this popular notion, once existence has been conferred on the effect, the effect will become independent of its agent, and will continue to

25 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, VI.1, 260.

26 This overview of these three sections of the *Ishārāt* draws on my 'Al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ*'.

27 Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ*, 2, 385.

28 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 57–59.

29 On the Avicennan notion of estimative propositions (*wahmiyyāt*) and the faculty of estimation (*wahm*), see Avicenna, *Najāt*, 115–118; cf. Black, 'Estimation (*wahm*) in Avicenna'; Hall, 'The *Wahm* in Ibn Sina's Psychology'; Griffel, 'Al-Ghazālī's Use of "Original Human Disposition" (*Fiṭra*)', 10 ff.

exist by virtue of the existence it obtained. He gives the example of the building, which continues to exist even after the builder is long dead. Some people—by whom he patently refers to the theologians—have the temerity even to assert that if it is conceivable for the Creator to pass away, the world would continue to exist, because the world is only dependent on God for its coming-to-be, to the exclusion of its continued existence. In their view, if the world depended on God for its existence *per se*, then every existent would likewise depend on another for its existence, and God Himself would have been dependent on another being for His existence.

In the second section (*Ishārāt* II.5.2), Avicenna analyses (*ḥallala*) the expression 'agent' (*fāʿil*) and related expressions to their constituent elements, and he then separates those elements that are essential to agency from those that are accidental.[30] He argues that the expression should be defined essentially as a thing that engenders the existence of another thing after the latter was nonexistent. All other elements ordinarily included in the concept of 'agency'—such as the agent's being voluntary or natural, or its production of the effect directly or using an instrument—are accidental, and hence essentially extraneous to this concept. Otherwise, expressions such as 'voluntary agent', 'natural agent', 'acting through an instrument', and the like, would have involved either repetition or contradiction. Yet none of these expressions, Avicenna argues, are internally repetitive or contradictory.

In the same section, Avicenna goes on to raise the following question concerning his definition of agency. If the essential constituents of the concept of 'effect' are (*a*) the existence of the effect, (*b*) its prior nonexistence, and (*c*) the temporal posteriority of its existence to its nonexistence, then on account of which of these constituents does the effect depend on its agent? Through a process of elimination, Avicenna argues that the constituent in question must be (*a*) the existence of the effect. For (*b*) nonexistence, obviously, is uncaused, and hence cannot be the constituent on which the dependence of the effect on its agent hinges. As to (*c*) the temporal posteriority of the existence of a temporally originated thing to its nonexistence, this is a necessary attribute of the effect, and as such uncaused. The section closes with a further question: If the effect depends on its agent on account of its existence, then is the existence of a temporally originated thing caused because (*a.1*) it is not necessary (i.e. possible), or (*a.2*) because it was nonexistent before it obtained its existence (i.e. it is temporally originated)?

30 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 59–65. On Avicenna's notion of 'analysis', see McGinnis, 'Penetrating Question', 64–67.

This question is answered in the third section (*Ishārāt*, II.5.3), labelled 'concluding discussion and a pointer' (*takmila wa-ishāra*).[31] Avicenna here argues that the conception 'necessary of existence, not in itself, but through another' is a general conception that is true both of entities that have always (*dāʾiman*) been necessitated through another and of those that have been necessitated through other entities for a finite duration of time. The conception 'preceded by nonexistence', on the other hand, is more specific, as it is true of the latter class of entities, but not of the former. Both conceptions are predicable of 'being dependent on another for existence'. However, if two conceptions—one general, and one specific—are predicated of the same conception, then the more general conception will be predicated of this notion essentially and in the first place, and the more specific conception will be predicated of it non-essentially and secondarily. Therefore, an effect depends on its agent because its existence is necessitated through another, and not because its existence is preceded by nonexistence. 'Being necessitated through another', i.e. being possible of existence, is an attribute that characterises effects permanently, and not only at the moment they come to be; so it follows that the dependence of effects on their causes must be equally permanent.

3.4 Al-Ghazālī's Criticism

The Avicennan conception of agency just described is attacked in Discussion 3 of al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*, titled, 'On showing [the philosophers'] obfuscation in asserting that God is the agent (*fāʿil*) and maker of the world, that the world is created and produced (*fiʿl*) by Him, and that with them these [expressions] are used figuratively rather than literally'.[32] Al-Ghazālī introduces the discussion by identifying three respects in which the philosophers misuse the expressions *fiʿl* and *fāʿil* by employing them in the context of cosmogony: (1) an 'agent' must be possessed of volition and knowledge, whereas God, in their view, is an involuntary cause; (2) an 'act' must come to be in time, whereas the world, according to the philosophers, is pre-eternal; and (3) they maintain that God is absolutely simple, and that from an absolutely simple entity only one, simple effect proceeds, so they are in no position to assert that the world, which is composed of different things, proceeds from God.[33] Here, we are only concerned with the second criticism.

31 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 65–71.

32 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 95–132, esp. 103–109.

33 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 95–96.

Against Avicenna's theory of agency and his conception of atemporal coming-to-be, al-Ghazālī reasserts the classical *kalām* definition of 'act' as bringing a thing from nonexistence into existence in time (*maʿnā l-fiʿl ikhrāj al-shayʾ min al-ʿadam ilā l-wujūd bi-iḥdāthi-hi*).[34] He then paraphrases Avicenna's defence of his position, including his previously mentioned disjunction and elimination argument, in which he establishes that the effect depends on its agent (*a*) with respect to its existence, by eliminating that it depends on it on account of either (*b*) its prior nonexistence or (*c*) the temporal posteriority of its existence to its nonexistence. By eliminating '*b*' and '*c*', Avicenna eliminates that this dependence rests on the effect's (temporal) coming-to-be.[35] Al-Ghazālī proceeds to respond to this argument as follows:

> The act depends on (*yataʿallaqu bi-*) the agent with respect to its coming-to-be, not with respect to its prior nonexistence, nor with respect to its being existent *simpliciter*. For, according to us, [the act] does not depend on [the agent] at the moment following its coming-to-be, during which it exists, but rather depends on it at the moment of its coming-to-be and inasmuch as this [occurrence] is coming-to-be and coming from nonexistence into existence (*khurūj min al-ʿadam ilā l-wujūd*). If the notion of coming-to-be is denied as true of [the supposed act], it cannot be conceived of as an act, or as being dependent on an agent.[36]

So, al-Ghazālī concedes Avicenna's elimination of disjunct '*b*', that the effect's dependence on its agent hinges on the effect's prior nonexistence. He also rejects disjunct '*a*', which Avicenna affirms. What al-Ghazālī then does is effectively to propose a fourth disjunct: (*d*) that the effect depends on its cause only for its coming-to-be, understood as an occurrence that takes place in an instant, which is the moment at which something that was nonexistent becomes existent. This is precisely the theologians' understanding of coming-to-be and its correlation with agency, which is why al-Ghazālī introduces it by 'according to us' (*ʿinda-nā*). Accordingly, he explains, it is inconceivable for a thing that does not come to be in time to be produced and to have an agent. What he does here is simply to assert his and the theologians' position, without supporting it with an argument that would force an Avicennist into a corner. But this tactic seems justified, as the onus is arguably on Avicenna to eliminate disjunct '*d*'.

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34 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 103.

35 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 103–106.

36 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 106.

Al-Ghazālī then turns to disjunct '*c*'—that the effect owes its dependence on its agent to the temporal posteriority of its existence to nonexistence—which Avicenna eliminates on the grounds that the temporal posteriority of existence to nonexistence is a necessary attribute of the existence of a temporally originated thing, and as such cannot be dependent on the agent's activity. It is true, al-Ghazālī responds, that temporal posteriority to nonexistence is not a caused attribute of existence, but it is nonetheless a condition (*sharṭ*) for existence to be caused by an agent. Being a condition for the agent's act, it need not be produced by the agent, just as the agent's own existence, capacity, volition and knowledge are conditions for his acts, but are not produced by him.[37]

So, al-Ghazālī rejects Avicenna's analysis of coming-to-be into a prior state of (continued) nonexistence, a subsequent state of (continued) existence, and an attribute of (continued) existence. Instead, he reasserts the classical *kalām* conception of coming-to-be as, strictly speaking, an occurrence that lasts no longer than an instant.

The remainder of the section is of less relevance to our present purposes, as it turns to the question of how God can be a pre-eternal agent, but produce acts in time. One pertinent point that transpires, however, is that al-Ghazālī, in this discussion, seems to advocate an Ashʿarī form of occasionalism. He writes that constant motion should be understood in terms of a series of successive instants, or 'parts' (*azjāʾ*), of motion, each of which comes to be *ex nihilo*, out of nothing (*ḥādith ʿan ʿadam*).[38] It is precisely this classical Ashʿarī view that al-Ghazālī champions in his theological manual, the *Iqtiṣād*, where he maintains that accidents lack continued existence and last for no more than an instant, and that the accident hence passes away (*inʿidām*) at each instant, although it can be renewed (*tajaddud*) at the next instant. This, he writes, is true of all classes of accidents, even colours. Following al-Juwaynī, he maintains that atoms, by contrast, enjoy continued existence so long as they contain instances of certain indispensible classes of accidents.[39]

In sum, while al-Ghazālī declares his opposition to the Avicennan thesis that an effect depends on its agent with respect to its existence, as opposed to its coming-to-be, he only asserts its direct antithesis—namely, the classical *kalām* view that a temporally originated thing depends on its agent for its coming-to-be, and that it continues to exist thereafter independently of the agent—but he does not substantiate it. This is hardly surprising, as al-Ghazālī's

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37 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 106–107.

38 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 109.

39 Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 37.

express task in the *Tahāfut* is to attack Avicenna's teachings, and not to lay out and to defend an alternative system. In Discussion 3, his focus is on Avicenna's theory of efficient causality, not in abstraction from its theological context, but only insofar as it underpins his theory of the pre-eternity of the world.

3.5 Al-Masʿūdī's Commentary

Al-Masʿūdī nowhere mentions al-Ghazālī in relation to this specific problem, yet I will argue towards the end of the present section that the *Tahāfut* is a key part of the background. For now, we must circle back to the *Ishārāt*.

Although *Ishārāt* II.5.1–3 is the discussion in which Avicenna refutes the classical *kalām* conception of agency and advances his own theory, al-Masʿūdī opens Section 9 of the *Shukūk* by citing a shorter passage, *Ishārāt* II.4.10. He turns to *Ishārāt* II.5.1–3 in the last quarter or so of the section. The structure of Section 9 is as follows:

1. Al-Masʿūdī cites *Ishārāt* II.4.10, where Avicenna argues that the existence of every possible being is conferred on it by another being.[40]
2. Al-Masʿūdī interprets the passage briefly, and submits an alternative theory, according to which the continued existence of some possible beings does not require a continuous cause of existence.[41]
3. Four particular cases are then adduced as evidence for al-Masʿūdī's thesis.[42]
4. A possible counter-argument to this thesis is addressed.[43]
5. A second possible counter-argument to the thesis is addressed.[44]
6. Al-Masʿūdī then cites *Ishārāt* II.5.1–3, in which, as we have seen, Avicenna argues against the view that an effect depends on its cause only with respect to its coming-to-be, as opposed to its continued existence.[45]
7. This Avicennan argument is confuted.[46]

So, al-Masʿūdī's first order of business in this section, particularly in parts 2–5 of the above outline, is to counter an Avicennan theory with his own alternative

40 *Shukūk*, 262.3–6.
41 *Shukūk*, 262.7–263.2.
42 *Shukūk*, 263.3–265.3.
43 *Shukūk*, 265.4–266.7.
44 *Shukūk*, 266.8–267.7.
45 *Shukūk*, 267.8–268.11.
46 *Shukūk*, 268.12–269.11.

theory, before attending to Avicenna's arguments. It is only in part 6 that he cites and addresses the most relevant argument deployed by Avicenna in support of his thesis, a thesis that in effect is merely asserted in the passage cited in part 1. We have already noted in Chapter 2 above how, commenting on another section of the *Shukūk*, al-Rāzī finds this procedure objectionable.[47]

Al-Masʿūdī's choice to centre his discussion on *Ishārāt* II.4.10, which occurs in the course of Avicenna's proof of the existence of the Necessary of Existence through Itself, may be influenced by a reading of the *Najāt*, where, as mentioned already, this is precisely the context in which Avicenna establishes the view that a continuously existing effect must be sustained continuously in existence by a coeval agent. So although it occurs earlier in the book, the passage arguably presupposes *Ishārāt* II.5.1–3, in which this point is substantiated. *Ishārāt* II.4.10 goes as follows:

> *Pointer*. That which, on account of itself, is characterised only of possibility cannot become existent through itself. For its existence does not preponderate over its nonexistence on account of its being possible. So if either [existence or nonexistence] becomes preponderant, that must be due to the presence or absence of something. Therefore, the existence of every possible being must be due to something other than itself.[48]

Al-Masʿūdī's commentary begins by considering two possible readings of this passage: either (*a*) that the existence of a possible thing depends on another only at the moment it is initiated (*ibtidāʾ*), or (*b*) that a possible thing depends on another for, and throughout, its continued existence (*dawām al-wujūd wa-baqāʾu-hu*). He has no complaints against the former view. Reading '*b*', however, is the correct reading, as confirmed by *Ishārāt* II.5.1–3 cited later in the section; and it is thus the view that the ensuing discussion attacks.[49]

So, the section targets Avicenna's general claim that all things possible of existence are dependent for their continued existence on a continuous and simultaneous efficient cause, and defends the counter-thesis that, in principle, a thing possible of existence requires a cause only to bring it into being, but then continues to exist independently of an efficient cause. The preponderator,

47 See pp. 58–59 above.

48 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 20.

49 On that the notion that a metaphysical efficient cause is simultaneous with its effect is central to Avicenna's proof of the existence of the Necessary of Existence through Itself, the context in which *Ishārāt* II.4.10 occurs, see Section 5.1 below.

in other words, is only needed to tip the balance, but not after the balance has been tipped. Al-Masʿūdī initiates his response by arguing that things that come to be fall under two classes according to whether or not they possess self-sustaining existence, and consequently whether or not they depend on their agent to sustain them in existence. The first is the class of things that possess continued existence, and hence need to be brought into being by an agent but afterwards continue to exist without having to be perpetually caused. This class includes all substances and most types of accidents. The second is the class of accidents that lack self-sustaining continued existence, and these are of two types.

The first sub-class includes accidents that appear to persist, but are actually 'renewed' (*tajaddada*) constantly by a cause. The only example we are given of this type of accidents is motion in space. The notion of 'renewal' here may seem to presuppose the atomistic conception of time espoused in classical *kalām*, but is in fact borrowed from Avicenna (who, in turn, adapts it from the Muʿtazila).[50] Locomotion, according to Avicenna, is produced in the mobile constantly by the inclination that supervenes upon it. This renewal of motion is not atomistic, but continuous: locomotion is 'continuously renewed' (*yatajaddadu ʿalā l-ittiṣāl*), as Avicenna writes.[51] On such accidents, al-Masʿūdī writes:

> Among accidents are some that have no fixed disposition or real continued existence (*hayʾa qārra wa-baqāʾ ḥaqīqī*), but of which similar instances are renewed in succession (*tatajaddadu amthālu-hu ʿalā l-taʿāqub*). These are called 'continually existing' only in a figurative sense (*yusammā bāqiyan majāzan*). For this continued existence is dependent on a sustaining cause (*ʿilla mubqiya*).[52]

Al-Masʿūdī accepts the Avicennan conception that locomotion must be constantly renewed by the agency of inclination. But he goes on to deny the supposition (*ẓann*) of 'some *mutakallimūn*' that all accidents likewise lack continued existence, a reference, it seems, to Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs.

The second sub-class includes accidents that, of themselves, lack continued existence, but may be sustained in existence by a force (*qasr*) applied con-

50 See Rashed, 'Natural Philosophy', 295–302, esp. 299–300. On Avicenna's theory of motion and inclination, see also McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 59–84; idem., 'A Medieval Arabic Analysis of Motion at an Instant'; Hasnaoui, 'La Dynamique d'Ibn Sīnā'.

51 Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.II.8, 194 (see p. 91 above).

52 *Shukūk*, 262.

stantly by an external agent. Such accidents supervene on a thing whose nature is contrary to theirs by a cause that forces (*qasara*) them thereon.

Only in these two cases, according to al-Masʿūdī, does an accident lack inherent persistence and depend on a constant efficient cause to sustain it constantly in existence, so long as it exists. They are hence the only exceptions to the general principle that he is in the process of defending—namely, that entities depend on their agents for their coming-to-be, but not for their continued existence. 'All substances and accidents other than these continue to exist independently of the continued existence of their cause'.[53]

Not all forced effects, however, break this general principle. For often, as al-Masʿūdī argues, their continued existence does not require a simultaneous sustaining efficient cause, and these exceptions provide support to his central thesis that most effects persist independently of an agent (so they are exceptions to the exceptions to this principle). He writes:

> If a forced existent (*mawjūd qasrī*) becomes fixed and set firmly in the substrate, and if the cause, which produces it and suppresses the nature that is contrary to it, intensifies, it may persist for some duration after the passing away of its cause, until the [thing's] innate nature strengthens to the extent that it repels it and causes it to pass away.[54]

Al-Masʿūdī gives two examples. First, when a body of water is affected by intense fire, heat will be forced onto it to the extent that it overcomes the natural coolness of water, which is its contrary. This heat will persist in the water for an extended duration after it has been removed from the fire, since the nature of water can only overcome heat and restore coolness gradually. Were it not for the natural activity of water, heat would remain perpetually in a heated body of water. The fact that it persists for a while after the influence of the fire comes to an end confirms that its continued existence is independent of its efficient cause; for otherwise a heated body of water would turn cool as soon as it has been removed from the fire.[55]

The same sequence of events can be observed when a stone is thrown upwards. Being predominantly made up of the element earth, a stone has a natural inclination (*mayl*) for downward motion, but will travel in upward motion, contrary to its natural inclination, by a forced inclination produced by the

53 *Shukūk*, 263.

54 *Shukūk*, 263.

55 *Shukūk*, 263.

thrower. Al-Masʿūdī reasons that the persistence of upward motion in the stone after the thrower has released it confirms that the motion is caused by a forced inclination that continues to exist in the stone throughout the duration of its upward motion. The correlation between the distance traversed by the stone in its upward motion and the force exerted by the thrower indicates that the cause of this forced inclination is the initial propulsion (*dafʿ*) generated by the thrower's motion. 'Had the continued existence of the effect been dependent on the continued existence of its cause, it would have been impossible for the [forced] inclination to continue to exist after the passing away of propulsion'.[56]

Al-Masʿūdī gives two further examples of effects that persist in the absence of their agents. First, colours, which are accidents of quality, continue to exist in bodies. When an object is dyed by the application of henna, the resulting colour will persist for a long time afterwards. The dyeing process does not occur by the adhesion of henna particles to the object's surface—this is attested by the facts that the green colour of henna differs from the brown or red colour produced in the dyed object, and that the dye cannot be removed with vigorous washing and scrubbing. Therefore, henna acts as the efficient cause of the colour produced in the dyed object, and this effect continues to exist after its cause has become absent.[57] Second, a body may undergo elemental change by the agency of an efficient cause, and the new elemental form it acquires may continue to exist after the passing away of its cause. For instance, when air is cooled it turns into water, and when water is heated it turns into air; both bodies may remain in the resultant form even when they are no longer affected, respectively, by coolness and heat.[58]

This last case, al-Masʿūdī points out, may elicit the following counter-explanation, which may be given in support of the Avicennan thesis. Even though the new elemental form comes to be by one cause, it will thereafter be sustained in existence by a different cause, namely the dependence of matter, with respect to its existence, on form. Matter cannot be devoid of form, but must constantly be in receipt of some form or other. It is equally receptive of all forms, and is not inherently predisposed to some forms over others. So when a given form comes to be in a material substrate, it will come to be by an efficient cause; and if the activity of that cause then comes to an end, the form it has produced will continue to exist in its material substrate. Matter itself will preserve (*ḥafiẓa*, *abqā*) that form, and as such be the preserving

56 *Shukūk*, 264.

57 *Shukūk*, 264.

58 *Shukūk*, 264–265.

cause (*ʿilla mubqiya*) that sustains its continued existence. Matter would preserve form in the absence of its originating cause by holding on to it, so to speak, since it is impossible for matter ever to be devoid of form. It follows that although the cause of coming-to-be may become absent, the effect will nonetheless be sustained in continued existence by a different, simultaneous cause.[59] This counter-explanation is introduced by, 'If it is said', which provides no clues as to whether al-Masʿūdī reproduced it from an earlier source, or whether he postulated it himself on behalf of Avicenna and his followers. The latter is most likely the case; for the notion that matter acts as a preserving cause for form is not one that Avicenna would advocate, but is in fact a view that he explicitly rejects. According to Avicenna, although matter, when combined with form, serves as one of the two proximate causes of body—namely, the material cause—it certainly does not cause the form with which it is combined. For matter is associated with passive potentiality and is actualised by the form it receives, but cannot itself be an actualising cause. It is moreover ontologically posterior to form; so to be a cause for form, it would become essentially prior to it.[60] The existence of form in suitably prepared matter, for Avicenna, is produced directly by the Active Intellect, which acts as its (metaphysical) efficient cause; and form is sustained in existence by its continued agency.

Responding to this possible counter-explanation, al-Masʿūdī argues that 'if you allow this with respect to [substantial] forms, then you must do the same with respect to all accidents, and indeed with respect to all possible existents'.[61] Take, for instance, the existence and nonexistence of the accident of the colour black. No material substrate can be devoid of either of these two contraries, just as it cannot be devoid of substantial form; yet matter is not inherently predisposed to either the presence or absence of blackness. If either possibility becomes actual in a given subject, it will do so by the influence of a preponderator (*murajjiḥ*); and if afterwards the alternative possibility replaces it, it will only do so, again, by the influence of some other preponderator. Yet in the absence of this second preponderator, the state of affairs brought about by the first preponderator will persist, not by an external cause, but purely by virtue of the fact that the underlying subject cannot be devoid of either possibility. Al-Masʿūdī writes:

59 *Shukūk*, 265.

60 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, II.4, 83–85; VI.1, 258.

61 *Shukūk*, 265.

> If the actual state of affairs is nonexistence, it will persist (*istamarra*) until the cause of existence comes to be; and if the actual state of affairs is existence, it will persist until the cause of nonexistence comes to be. The initial occurrence of either of the two contraries requires a cause. Thereafter that cause may become absent, yet the actual alternative will persist by virtue of a different cause, which is the impossibility that the subject be devoid of either of the two contraries.[62]

The radical divergence of this position from Avicenna's account of causation and possible existence is striking. Al-Masʿūdī's analysis of the coming-to-be and continued existence of possible things has some explanatory power, but it hardly has any argumentative power against Avicenna's account. Most obviously, al-Masʿūdī does not seem to subscribe to the distinction between metaphysical efficient causes, which produce existence, and natural efficient causes, which produce motion. What is more, unlike Avicenna, as already noted, he maintains that a material substrate can act as a preserving cause for a species form engendered by some initial cause.

Al-Masʿūdī then considers evidence that may be adduced in support of the Avicennan thesis that the continuous existence of the effect depends on the continuous existence of its cause: namely, that light is caused by fire or the sun, and ceases to be as soon as its cause becomes absent.[63] He responds that such evidence is insufficient for establishing the general proposition it is meant to support. It is enough to produce just a single case in which the effect outlasts its efficient cause, for the Avicennan thesis to collapse. What is more, the explanation of the concomitance (*talāzum*) between cause and effect in cases in which the two are inextricably concomitant with respect to their continued existence and nonexistence, such as light and its cause, may be more specific than the general principle that the continued existence of all effects depends on the continued existence of their causes. This more specific explanation, al-Masʿūdī opines, may be unknown to us: it could be, for example, that light, like motion, needs to be renewed constantly by its cause, or that light is a forced effect that is contrary to the nature of air, and is repelled swiftly by it, so it passes away without a trace as soon as the cause that forces it on air becomes absent.

Finally, al-Masʿūdī turns to *Ishārāt* II.5.1–3 to address Avicenna's above-described elimination argument, which he describes as an investigation and

62 *Shukūk*, 266.

63 *Shukūk*, 266–267.

disjunction argument (*al-sabr wa-l-taqsīm*).[64] He confutes the argument on the grounds that the disjunction set out by Avicenna is not exhaustive, since it does not account for all conceivable divisions.[65] As mentioned, Avicenna considers three options for the grounds on which a thing that comes to be depends on its agent: (*a*) the existence of the effect, (*b*) its prior nonexistence, and (*c*) the temporal posteriority of its existence to its nonexistence. Al-Masʿūdī accepts the sub-arguments that Avicenna puts forth to eliminate the last two disjuncts. However, he does not automatically concede disjunct '*a*', since, he avers, there is in fact a fourth disjunct that Avicenna neglects to consider: namely, (*d*) that a thing that comes to be depends on an efficient cause because of the effect's 'coming from nonexistence into existence' (*al-khurūj min al-ʿadam ilā l-wujūd*, or *al-dukhūl fī l-wujūd*). This, we are told, is precisely the sense denoted by 'coming-to-be' (*ḥudūth*, *ḥuṣūl*), as well as by 'change' (*taghayyur*, *tabaddul*), 'motion', 'alteration' (*istiḥāla*), and 'affection' (*infiʿāl*, *taʾaththur*). The *process* of coming-to-be (*ḥuṣūl*) is different from each of (*a*) that which obtains (*ḥāṣil*) from the process, namely existence, (*b*) prior nonexistence (which is obvious), and (*c*) the attribute (*ṣifa*) of the existence that obtains from the process, which is the attribute of being preceded by nonexistence. 'Coming-to-be', al-Masʿūdī asserts, belongs to the category of affection (*an yanfaʿila*), and as such is not the same as 'that which comes to be' (*ḥādith*)—that is, the effect (*athar*), or more precisely the existence of the effect—which belongs to the category of quality. The thing's 'becoming existent' (*ṣayrūratu-hu mawjūdan*) is different from existence itself, and irreducible to a mere attribute of existence. This distinction between the process, or event, of coming-to-be and its subsequent, enduring outcome is analogous to the distinction between 'being heated' (*tasakhkhun*) and heat itself (*sukhūna*), and between 'becoming black' and the colour black itself. Al-Masʿūdī submits that this occurrence, which Avicenna fails to consider in his disjunction, is in fact the true grounds for the effect's dependence on its agent. The agent, in other words, is responsible for the affection (that is, the process of bringing something into being), rather than for the effect itself (that is, existence), which hence persists independently of the agent.

Leaving aside al-Masʿūdī's appeal to the Aristotelian categories here, we can identify two likely sources for his analysis of coming-to-be. The first is Discussion 3 of al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*, examined earlier. Al-Ghazālī, as we have

64 *Shukūk*, 268. See pp. 94–95 above.

65 On exhaustive and non-exhaustive disjunctions, see: Shihadeh, 'Argument from Ignorance', 192 ff.

seen, eliminates disjuncts '*a*' and '*b*' of the disjunction set up by Avicenna. Yet instead of affirming the remaining disjunct '*c*' (the temporal posteriority of the effect's existence to its nonexistence), he invokes the earlier-*kalām* definition of '*ḥudūth*', namely the effect's 'coming from nonexistence into existence' (*al-khurūj min al-ʿadam ilā l-wujūd*), which is an occurrence as opposed to an attribute of the subsequent existent.[66] It is precisely with respect to this *occurrence*, al-Ghazālī asserts, that the effect depends on its agent. Yet he neither elaborates nor emphasises the distinction between the two senses of '*ḥudūth*'. Al-Masʿūdī seems to pick up on the distinction subtly made by al-Ghazālī, and on its basis he introduces the fourth division, '*d*', into Avicenna's disjunction, differentiating it from division '*c*'.

The distinction that al-Masʿūdī proposes between divisions '*d*' (the effect's coming-to-be) and '*a*' (the effect's existence) recalls the distinction that Māturīdīs make between 'creating' (*takwīn*) and the 'thing created' (*mukawwan*). One of the central tenets of Māturīdism, and a major point of conflict with Ashʿarism, is that 'Creator' (*khāliq*) is affirmed as a real and pre-eternal attribute of God over and above His power (*qudra*). The activity of this attribute—that is, creating (*khalq*, *takwīn*), or bringing into being (*ījād*)—belongs to the attribute itself, and as such is ontologically distinct from the things that exist separately from God and are the products of this activity.[67] For should 'creating' boil down to the mere existence of created things, it would not be a real attribute of God, but only a relational one, nor would it be pre-eternal, as it would apply to God only while He is actually creating things. Ashʿarīs, by contrast, maintain that God creates things, which strictly speaking are His acts, directly through His capacity, without the involvement of a distinct attribute or intermediary process of 'bringing into being'. In their view, 'creating' (*khalq*) and 'what is created' (*makhlūq*) are identical; and so are 'coming-to-be' (*ḥudūth*) and 'what comes to be' (*muḥdath*).[68] Though the Māturīdī theory of the divine attribute

66 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 106 (see pp. 96–97 above).

67 See, for instance, al-Māturīdī, *Tawḥīd*, 110–113; al-Nasafī, *Tamhīd*, 191 ff.; al-Ṣābūnī, *Kifāya*, 135–147; Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain*, 188 ff.; Rudolph, *al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology*, 278 ff.

68 Al-Anṣārī, *Ghunya*, 1, 438 ff. Classical Ashʿarīs rarely pay attention to the Māturīdī position, or to other Māturīdī doctrines for this matter. Al-Anṣārī ascribes the distinction between 'creation' and 'created' to the Karrāmiyya and Abū l-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf (d. between 226/840 and 236/850) and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī of the Muʿtazila (*Ghunya*, 1, 340–341; 1, 439). To my knowledge, one of the earliest Ashʿarīs to respond to this Māturīdī doctrine is al-Rāzī (*Muḥaṣṣal*, 435–437; *Maʿālim*, 59–60).

of 'creating' is in itself of little direct relevance to al-Masʿūdī's response to Avicenna's theory of efficient causation, the distinction between the process of creating and that which is created is most probably what inspires this response. This distinction would have been familiar to scholars based in Bukhara, and indeed it was the subject of one of the debates in which Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī (d. 580/1184), the chief Māturīdī in town, chose to engage al-Rāzī during his stay in the city.[69]

So, what—we may ask—motivates al-Masʿūdī's criticism of Avicenna's views on efficient causation and the continued existence of things possible of existence, and his own counter-thesis? It will be recalled that, in the *Ishārāt* and the *Najāt*, this problem is treated in the context of theology, particularly both in the course of proving the existence of the First Cause and in the discussion of cosmogony, where it plays a key role in Avicenna's theory of the pre-eternity of the world. We have also seen how in a discussion on creation in the *Tahāfut*, al-Ghazālī approaches the problem as having a purely theological import. So, although Section 9 of al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk* makes no mention of God, but treats the problem as though it only revolved around an abstract metaphysical principle, we can safely assume that to him it has more or less the same theological relevance it has to Avicenna and al-Ghazālī. There is a clear hint at this theological background in the conclusion of the section:

> What is dependent on the act and the agent is the affection; for it is inconceivable without [the agent's acting]. As to the [thing that becomes] realised and actual, it has no dependence on the agent; for the act is the bringing-into-being, and must be preceded by nonexistence. It thus becomes evident that the initiation of existence depends on an efficient cause only for the coming-to-be [of the effect]. However, it is inconceivable that coming-to-be endures perpetually; for it must be preceded by nonexistence.[70]

This closing statement is the closest that al-Masʿūdī comes to asserting his ultimate goal in the question under discussion. Once it is established that the coming-to-be of a thing is caused, and that its continued existence is uncaused, it will immediately follow that a pre-eternal thing cannot be caused, and consequently that for the world to be dependent, one way or another, for its existence

69 Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, 17–20. The same problem was also the centre of a debate in which al-Rāzī engaged in Ghazna (*Munāẓarāt*, 21–22).

70 *Shukūk*, 269.

on God it must be temporally originated. The key expression in the passage is 'the precedence of nonexistence' (*taqaddum al-ʿadam*): for things to be created, they must be preceded by nonexistence (that is, in the temporal sense of precedence). Al-Masʿūdī's assertion that coming-to-be cannot persist perpetually, beyond the moment of coming-to-be, seems targeted against Avicenna's notion of atemporal 'essential coming-to-be' (*ḥudūth dhātī*), to which he appeals in explaining the causedness and atemporal createdness of pre-eternal possible beings.[71] To the extent that he re-establishes the connection between causation and coming-to-be, al-Masʿūdī reasserts the classical *kalām* thesis, also endorsed by al-Ghazālī, that the effect depends on its agent for its coming-to-be, but not for its continued existence.

That said, al-Masʿūdī clearly does not espouse the occasionalist doctrine of continuous creation advocated in classical Ashʿarism and Māturīdism, as he does not maintain that all accidents lack continued existence of themselves and need to be renewed by God at each moment. This is where he departs with al-Ghazālī's more conservative treatment of the problem. His position appears, to an extent, analogous to the previously described Bahshamī Muʿtazilī position, in so far as it affirms that the continued existence of certain classes of simple created entities is uncaused. Yet it clashes with Bahshamī ontology at important points, not least the fundamental questions of what an accident is, and which types of accidents have, and which ones lack, continued existence, and under which circumstances. What is more, al-Masʿūdī, in contrast to Bahshamīs, affirms natural causality: so, for instance, it is the nature (*ṭabʿ*) of water, rather than the power of God, that engenders coolness.

So if al-Masʿūdī's discussion is driven, at least in part, by theological motives and commitments, it seems that he salvages the doctrine of the creation of the world *ex nihilo* at the expense of denying constant creation. God brings things into being, but His creatures then continue to exist and to operate autonomously in accordance with their inherent natures.

71 For instance, Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 84–90.

CHAPTER 4

The Ontology of Possibility: Problems 10 and 14

As our second case study, we consider two sections of the *Shukūk*, in which al-Masʿūdī applies himself to critiquing a component of Avicenna's modal metaphysics. In Section 10, he addresses the philosopher's position on the ontology of the possibility of generable things. A thing that comes to be, Avicenna reasons, must be possible of existence before it exists; yet for it to be possible, its possibility must have some real and concrete presence, and it can only do so, he argues, if this possibility inheres in a substrate. Possibility in this sense is also termed 'potentiality' (*quwwa*), which explains why Avicenna's main discussion of this type of possibility in the *Shifāʾ* and the *Najāt* appears in the midst of his broader treatment of precisely this subject.[1] The Aristotelian background of this notion of possibility-cum-potentiality is all too evident: in his account of coming-to-be, Aristotle identifies three principles engaged in the process—namely, a subject that serves as the underlying recipient, a form that comes to be and is received by the subject, and finally privation, which supervenes as an accident upon the underlying subject and corresponds to the form that comes to pass. This last principle is the potentiality that obtains before the coming-to-be of the new form.[2] However, the confluence of the Aristotelian conception of potentiality with modality originates with Avicenna.

From his theory of potentiality, Aristotle goes on to infer that motion is beginningless. For every instance of motion presupposes the prior existence of something capable of being moved, and the coming-to-be of that movable thing is itself an instance of motion, which presupposes the prior existence of another movable object, and so forth *ad infinitum*. From this, it follows that time too is beginningless.[3] This argument is taken over by Avicenna, who adapts it as a cornerstone of his own theory of the pre-eternity of the world.[4]

1 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 177 ff.; *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.11, 361; *Najāt*, 534–536. On Avicenna's account of potentiality, see now Kukkonen, 'Potentiality in Classical Arabic Thought', Section 2.

2 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IX; *Physics*, I.7; I.9.

3 Aristotle, *Physics*, VIII, 251a8–b10.

4 On this borrowing from Aristotle, see, for instance, McGinnis, 'The Eternity of the World'; idem., 'Making Something Out of Nothing'. For studies of the broader historical background of Avicenna's modal metaphysics, see: idem., 'What Underlies the Change from Potentiality to Possibility'; Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, part II.

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And indeed in the *Ishārāt*, the argument is set out in the context of cosmogony, as we shall see. The bottom line of Avicenna's argument is this.[5] If everything that comes to be requires a pre-existing substrate, then prime matter must be pre-eternal. Matter, that is, did not come to be at some point in the past (nor, we may add, can further portions of matter come to be in the future), and this is for two reasons. The first is that if we assume that matter came to be *ex nihilo* at some point in the past, then the possibility of the first form it received must have been present before the coming-to-be of the form, and this possibility would have required a material substrate in which it inhered—this, however, contradicts our initial assumption that matter came to be *ex nihilo*. The second is that if matter came to be after not having existed, the possibility of its coming-to-be would have been present prior to its coming-to-be, and this possibility would have required a further substrate in which it inhered. Which is to say that matter would have needed a pre-existing material substrate, other than itself; and if that further substrate was not pre-eternal but had a temporal origin, it too would have demanded a further material substrate; and so forth *ad infinitum*. From this *reductio ad absurdum*, it follows that matter is pre-eternal. And since prime matter, as Avicenna has it, cannot be formless, but necessarily must exist in combination with forms to constitute bodies, it follows that the world as a whole must be pre-eternal.[6]

It is little wonder, thus, that Avicenna's theory of the possibility of things that come to be promptly became the subject of contention. Al-Ghazālī, as I shall explain in what follows, rebuffs this theory, alongside the proof premised thereon, in the course of his attack against the philosophers' doctrine of the pre-eternity of the world—a doctrine that he, of course, lambasts as an arch-heresy, since it conflicts with what he considers to be explicit scriptural depictions of the world as God's creation *ex nihilo*. As al-Masʿūdī wades into this debate, it behoves us to begin by exploring the Avicennan and Ghazālian background before turning to his commentary.

At the end of the present chapter, we shall turn to Section 14 of the *Shukūk*, a short discussion in which the question of the possibility of generable things is revisited. There, al-Masʿūdī considers the case of the human soul, which is special in being an entity that comes to be but does not exist in a substrate, and therefore, according to Avicenna, does not pass away.

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5 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IX.1, 374–376; *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.11, 359–364; *Najāt*, 607–608.

6 On that matter is never devoid of form, see Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, II.3, 72 ff.; IV.2, 183 ff.; *Najāt*, 502–506; *Ishārāt*, 2, 202 ff.

4.1 Avicenna on Dispositional Possibility and *Per Se* Possibility

Avicenna discusses the possibility of generable things in both the Metaphysics and Physics of the *Shifāʾ*.[7] In the Metaphysics, the subject is treated, as already noted, in the context of his discussion of potentiality and associated topics.[8] He explains that there are two types of possibility pertaining to concrete individual things (*shayʾ*):

> The thing that is possible to be is [also] possible not to be; otherwise it would be necessary [for it] to be. That which is possible to be must either [*a*] be possible to be and not to be a different thing (*mumkin an yakūna shayʾ ākhar wa-an lā yakūna*)—and this is the subject for the form of the [other] thing to inhere therein—or [*b*] be as such when considered in itself (*bi-iʿtibār nafsi-hi*) (as, for example, whiteness), if it is possible for it in itself to be and not to be. This [latter] must either [*b.1*] be something that, if it exists, would be self-subsistent—such that the possibility of its existence consists in [the fact] that it is possible for it to be self-subsistent and separate [from matter]—or [*b.2*] [something] that, if it exists, exists in another.[9]

That is to say, 'possible' can be said in relation to individual things in either of two ways, depending on whether it pertains in the first place to the subject or the form. The first (*a*) is to say that it is possible for a subject to be X, when that subject is presently not X. For example, if it is currently spring, I can point to a green leaf and say that it is possible for it to turn, say, yellowish brown (come autumn), in which case I will be referring to the substrate, which currently is recipient to the accidental form of greenness, and its receptivity, under certain circumstances, to a form other than the one it currently has. Once the leaf turns yellowish brown, it will no longer be the case that the leaf is possibly yellowish brown, since it will actually be of this new colour.

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7 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 177–182; *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.11, 359 ff.; cf. *Najāt*, 534–536; *Dānish-nāma*, 62–63.

8 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 177. The discussion begins in the middle of line 6 (= p. 136, l. 3, in Marmura's edition); '*wa-l-shayʾ alladhī* …' should start a new paragraph. The previous sentence belongs to Avicenna's discussion of the views of 'certain ancients, including the Megarians' (IV.2, 176–177). Recent studies of Avicenna's treatment of possibility in *Ilāhiyyāt* IV.2 seem to overlook the crucial introductory part of the discussion (p. 177, ll. 6–12) and instead begin at l. 13.

9 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 177 (based on Marmura's translation, with key adjustments, p. 136).

The second type of possibility (*b*), which is associated with form, is the possibility of the thing in itself (*fī nafsi-hi, fī dhāti-hi*). This I shall term '*per se* possibility', or 'essential possibility'. If I say, for instance, that the autumnal colour I am calling 'yellowish brown' is possible in itself, I will be referring to the possibility of existence of the colour itself, rather than to the susceptibility of some substrate or other to receive this colour. And, I propose that, for Avicenna, *per se* possibility can be either absolute and universal, or conditional and particular, and that in this context his expression 'possible in itself' should be read as referring to particular *per se* possibility, as I shall explain shortly.

Now, as Avicenna goes on to explain in the above passage, if a thing is possible in itself (that is, possible in the *per se* sense of possibility), it can be postulated as being either (*b.1*) self-subsistent, or (*b.2*) subsistent in another. The latter case (*b.2*) is straightforward enough: If a thing subsists in another, then this other—its substrate—will have the former type of possibility, that is, the possibility to receive a new form (in other words, *b.2* simply reduces to *a*). For the colour yellowish brown to be in itself possible of instantiation, there must already be something—such as a leaf—that has the possibility of becoming yellowish brown. More problematic is the former case (*b.1*), since the coming-to-be of a thing that is self-subsistent and separate in its existence from matter will not occur in a substrate; so there is nothing that possesses the possibility to be that thing prior to its coming-to-be.[10] Such a thing would either (*b.1.1*) have no connection whatsoever to matter, or (*b.1.2*) have some connection to matter. If (*b.1.1*) a self-subsistent thing has no connection (*ʿalāqa*) at all to matter, such that it neither subsists in matter nor depends one way or another on some material object or other, then the possibility of this hypothetical entity, which precedes its coming-to-be, would not occur in matter, but would have to be self-subsistent. The only other alternative is for the possibility of that thing to be completely absent prior to its coming-to-be; however, 'if the possibility of its existence does not obtain, it would not be possible of existence, but impossible'.[11] So, if possibility is a substance, then it would have its own independent essence, and would not consist of a mere relation (*muḍāf*). However, possibility *is* a relation—that is, a relation to something that is not yet actual—so it can only be an accident, rather than a substance. From this *reductio ad absurdum*,

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10 Starting at Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 177, l. 15, from '*wa-in kāna—idhā kāna—qāʾiman bi-nafsi-hi*' (my punctuation), which I render as, 'If, assuming [such a thing] exists, it is self-subsistent …'. The second '*kāna*' is synonymous with '*wujida*'; and '*qāʾiman*' is the predicate of the first '*kāna*'.

11 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 177.

it follows that a possible thing that has absolutely no dependence on matter (*b.1.1*) cannot come to be after not having existed, though, of course, this leaves open the prospect that such entities may have existed from pre-eternity.[12] (Avicenna, of course, affirms the existence of such entities, though they bear little relevance to his discussion of potentiality.)

As to (*b.1.2*) the hypothetical case of self-subsisting things that do have some connection to matter, they can either come to be *from* (*min*) another thing, or *with* another.[13] An example of a thing that comes to be from a subject is body, which comes to be from the combination of matter and form. Obviously, however, the coming-to-be of a body reduces to the coming-to-be of its new form (so it reduces to '*b.2*' above). More interesting is the case of a substance that comes to be *with* another.[14] The rational soul, which is immaterial and self-subsisting, comes to be with the formation of the human body. Yet, Avicenna explains, the possibility of its existence resides in the body, not in the sense that the body is potentially a soul (in the same way that a non-white body is potentially white), nor in the sense that the body, or its matter, has the potentiality to receive a soul that would become imprinted therein (in the same way that a subject has the potentiality to receive the colour white), but in the sense that the existence of the rational soul depends on the existence of a suitably composed body with which it has a specific connection, which rests on the fact that an individual body is predisposed to serve as an instrument for an individual soul.[15]

The upshot of Avicenna's discussion thus far is that the coming-to-be of a temporally generated thing—be it subsistent in another or self-subsistent—must be preceded by a real possibility that obtains in a substrate. He returns to the same subject a little later on in *Ilāhiyyāt* IV.2, where he asserts his intention to 'confirm' the point made earlier, namely, that 'everything that comes to be has a material principle'.[16] The purpose, hence, is to confirm a view that has already been established—which suggests that the view is established and then re-established (or confirmed) by two distinct lines of argument.[17] And indeed,

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12 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 177–178.

13 Starting at Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 178, l. 8, from '*wa-ammā idhā kāna …*', which should introduce a new paragraph.

14 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 178–179.

15 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 178–179 (reading *ka-kawn* instead of *kawn* in two cases: p. 178, ll. 11 and 12). Elsewhere, Avicenna says that this connection is obscure (*Nafs*, 223–225; cf. Druart, 'The Human Soul's Individuation and its Survival after the Body's Death', 261ff.; McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 124–125).

16 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 181.

17 Pace McGinnis (*Avicenna*, 182ff., esp. 187–188), who reads the discussions in *Ilāhiyyāt*

it is only the latter, 'confirming' argument that we find in the *Ishārāt* and the *Najāt*. So let us shift our attention slightly to the relevant passage in the *Ishārāt*, since it is the focus of al-Masʿūdī's commentary.

The subject is treated in Chapter 5 of the Physics and Metaphysics of the *Ishārāt*, titled 'On demiurgy and [atemporal] creation' (*fī l-ṣunʿ wa-l-ibdāʿ*), the first discussion in which we have already treated in our previous chapter. This chapter of the *Ishārāt* sets out the broader structure of Avicenna's cosmogony, with an emphasis on the world being both pre-eternal and the effect of the First Cause. Concluding the chapter, Avicenna counters competing cosmogonies, most importantly the theologians' doctrine that the world is created *ex nihilo* in time through a voluntary act of God.[18] The passage that concerns us here—since it is quoted and commented on by al-Masʿūdī—is labelled 'a pointer' (*ishāra*), i.e. a proof, and it runs as follows (*Ishārāt* II.5.6):

> Everything that comes to be must have been possible of existence prior to its existence. So the possibility of its existence must have obtained (*ḥāṣil*) [prior to its coming-to-be]. However, [this possibility] cannot be the power (*qudra*) of one who is capable of [bringing that thing into being]. For otherwise, if it is said of the impossible that 'it is beyond power (*ghayr maqdūr ʿalay-hi*) because it is not possible in itself' (*fī nafsi-hi*), that would amount to asserting that it is beyond power because it is beyond power, or it is not possible in itself because it is not possible in itself. So it becomes clear that this possibility is different from the capable agent's being capable of producing it. And since it cannot be a thing that is intelligible in itself (*maʿqūl bi-nafsi-hi*) and does not exist in a subject, but is relative, it must require a subject. Therefore, what comes to be must be preceded by a potentiality for existence and a subject.[19]

Everything that comes to be, Avicenna submits, must be possible of existence in itself prior to its coming-to-be; otherwise it would be impossible of existence in itself, and hence would not exist. This possibility cannot be merely nonexistent, but must exist (*mawjūd*).[20] It must have an extra-mental reality, which differentiates it, as a determinate thing, over and above the level of indeter-

IV.2 and *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.11 as offering Avicenna's general analysis of possibility and then turning to the possibility of what is temporally created. In my reading, these discussions are concerned exclusively with the possibility of temporally generated beings.

18 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 102–116.

19 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 78–84.

20 Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.11, 359.

minate nonexistence. 'For many a nonexistent thing', Avicenna writes, 'is not possible of existence'.[21]

But if the possibility of a thing X pre-exists the actual existence of X, then exactly what sort of thing is this possibility? Avicenna argues, first of all, that it should not be identified with the power (*qudra*) of some (voluntary) agent, by which he intends a metaphysical agent capable of bringing things into being, rather than a natural agent whose activity is only to produce motion in already existing things, as we explained earlier.[22] There is an unmistakable reference here to the theologians, whom Avicenna portrays as promoting the belief that possibility hinges solely on divine power. He counters this view by arguing that for an agent to be capable of producing an effect, that effect must be possible in itself to begin with; otherwise, if the thing itself is not already possible, it will be impossible of existence and accordingly beyond the creative capacity of any agent. So since the possibility of a thing is a precondition for its being produced by an efficient cause, possibility cannot be defined as a thing's being the object of an agent's power.

So, if the possibility of a thing exists, but is not grounded in the power of an agent, then like all existents, it either is self-subsistent, or subsists in a subject. However, as explained already, it cannot be a substance in itself, for as a substance it would have its own independent existence and be 'intelligible in itself', whereas possibility is by its very definition correlative (*muḍāf*) to that thing for which it is a possibility.[23] It can be cognised only by reference (*maʿqūl bi-l-qiyās*) to something other than itself.[24] For the possibility of things that come to be is always a possibility *for* a specific thing, which is not yet actual—possibility for a human being, possibility for an apple tree, etc.—and never exists abstractly as possibility *simpliciter*, which is associated with nothing specific. So since possibility does not subsist by itself, it must subsist in a subject, upon which it supervenes as an accident. If the possibility is for a form, then the substrate in which it inheres will be prime matter; for instance, if water turns into air, the possibility of air will inhere in the matter of the body of water before the transmutation takes place. If the possibility is for an accident, then it will inhere in a substance that may then undergo accidental change.

21 Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.11, 359 (my translation).

22 See Section 3.2 above. Power, for Avicenna, denotes a natural or metaphysical efficient cause associated with volition (*irāda*), even in cases where an agent's volition is unchanging and determined by its essence (*Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 172–173).

23 Avicenna, *Najāt*, 535; *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 182; *Ishārāt*, 3, 83.

24 Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.11, 359.

One of the most important points to note here is that in the above-quoted *Ishārāt* II.5.6 and parallel passages in other works, Avicenna asserts that for a thing to be possible *in itself* (*fī nafsi-hi*), its possibility must inhere in a substrate, otherwise the thing will be impossible *in itself*.[25] Should this be taken to mean that unless there is presently at least one substrate in which the possibility for the form F inheres, F will be impossible in itself? This seems to be the *prima facie* reading of our Avicennan sources. But it hardly makes sense to say that the *per se* possibility of F—say, the colour black—rests absolutely on the presence of the possibility of F in particular substrates, such that if at one moment the possibility of F inheres in one or more substrates, the essence F will be possible in itself absolutely, and if at another moment the possibility of F inheres in no substrates at all, the essence F will be impossible in itself absolutely. The only reading that makes sense of Avicenna's use of the expression 'the possibility of the thing in itself' in this context is that it refers, not to absolute, universal *per se* possibility, but to particular *per se* possibility, as already suggested a little earlier. So, a *particular* instantiation of form F will be possible of existence in itself *in a particular substrate* and *at a given time*, if that substrate bears the possibility to receive F. The universal possibility of F, by contrast, is unconditional and not at issue. But how does the particular *per se* possibility of F relate to the possibility that inheres in the substrate? The two are in fact conceptually distinct, but ontologically inextricable, as the above-discussed exposition in the Metaphysics of the *Shifāʾ* makes clear. The particular *per se* possibility of F is what Avicenna refers to as the possibility of the thing 'when considered in itself' (*mumkin bi-iʿtibār nafsi-hi*) (division '*b.2*' above), whereas the possibility in the substrate is the possibility of the thing 'to be a different thing' (*mumkin an yakūna shayʾan ākhar*) (division '*a*' above).[26] We have seen that the former type of possibility is the flipside of the latter type: to say that form F is in itself possible in substrate S is equivalent to saying that S is possibly an F, or bears the possibility to be an F. To say that the colour yellowish brown is in itself possible in this individual leaf means that the leaf has the possibility of becoming yellowish brown in colour. I shall term the possibility of S to be, or to receive, F 'dispositional possibility', to distinguish it from the possibility of F in itself, which I have already termed '*per se* possibility'.

Thus far, Avicenna has only shown that the possibility of a temporally generable thing must be present in a substrate. Still, although he tells us that pos-

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25 Cf. Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 181; *Najāt*, 534–535.

26 See pp. 111–112 above.

sibility is potentiality and can be present in a substrate, it is not immediately obvious, from his main discussions of the subject, what he means by possibility here or how it comes about in a subject. For it is plain that the possibility that precedes a thing that comes to be is not potentiality *simpliciter*. We do, however, have one vital clue already, namely, that possibility is a 'relation'.

The possibility of things that come to be, for Avicenna, reduces to privation (*ʿadam*) in a material substrate. As such, it corresponds to one of the three principles that Aristotle identifies as required for the process of coming-to-be, although Avicenna does not consider privation to be a 'principle' properly speaking.[27] Prime matter, considered in itself, has the potentiality to receive all forms, and is thus of itself characterised by an absolute, indeterminate privation. In other words, matter of itself does not possess distinct potentialities for different forms, for instance, a distinct potentiality for the form of water and another for the form of air. The possibility of water is not, *per se*, constantly and inherently present in matter. So the privation inherent in prime matter does not represent the possibility for specific generable things, which precedes their coming-to-be. It is only when privation in a substrate narrows down and becomes determinate and restricted as a passive capacity for a specific form—a *sui generis* correspondence to, and fitness for, the form—that we can speak of the possibility of that specific form obtaining and being present in that particular substrate. This *sui generis* privation is a disposition in the substrate, and it is brought about by whatever circumstances the substrate is under at the time.

Accordingly, natural, dispositional possibility is circumstantial and dynamic. For a withered tree to turn green, a bundle of circumstances are required, and these normally coincide in spring, or can be brought about artificially—for instance, by the provision of sufficient water and warmth. Either way, these circumstances will make it possible for the tree to green up. However, this occurrence will be impossible when fitting circumstances are absent, for instance if it is autumn, or when obstructing circumstances are present, for instance if the tree's environment is affected by a high level of pollution. As to the metaphysical *per se* possibility of the colour green, it is unconditioned and immutable.

Bahmanyār provides an illuminating example to illustrate the notion that the possibility of the coming-to-be of a form exists in matter.[28] Possibility, he

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27 On possibility as privation, and on that privation is not a principle, see McGinnis, 'Making Something of Nothing', esp. 557–565.

28 Bahmanyār, *Taḥṣīl*, 483–484.

explains, is analogous to an empty courtyard, and the matter in which this possibility inheres is analogous to the house in which the inner courtyard is located. Possibility is an attribute (*ṣifa*) of matter, just as the courtyard is an attribute of the house. Now the empty courtyard has the potentiality to accommodate a group of men, and as such—that is, in relation to the group of men—it represents a possibility of existence (*imkān wujūd*). The courtyard, in this respect, is the privation (*maʿnā ʿadamī*) in matter—the possibility-in-matter—which makes the group of men (analogous to the form) possible of existence in the house.

Medieval commentators on Avicenna elucidate this notion of particular potentiality in terms of preparedness (*istiʿdād*) and proximate potentiality (*quwwa qarība*)—concepts that Avicenna employs in discussions of potentiality, though nowhere, as far as I am aware, to explain possibility-in-matter as such.[29] Around the 7th/13th century, the term 'dispositional possibility' (or 'possibility through preparedness', *imkān istiʿdādī*) was introduced to differentiate this conception of possibility from '*per se* possibility' (or 'essential possibility', *imkān dhātī*).[30] To my knowledge, the earliest source to invoke the concept of preparedness in this context is al-Masʿūdī, to whom we shall turn shortly, though the first to offer a fully fledged exposition using these terms is al-Rāzī. He offers the following extremely helpful explanation of the theory in an extant excerpt from his *Jawābāt*:

> Everything that comes to be is preceded by matter. For everything that comes to be hinges ultimately, in the chain of dependence, on the Necessary [of Existence] through Itself, whose activity cannot occur under some conditions but not under others. Rather, It constantly overflows [existence] upon all that is possible of existence. Therefore, all that comes to be at a particular time, but was previously nonexistent, was not possible of existence [when it was nonexistent]. Otherwise, it would have been existent, as we have explained. The possibility that it lacks at the time [it is nonexistent] is not the possibility concomitant to its essence (*al-imkān al-lāzim li-l-māhiyya*). For if at one point in time, a thing is not possible in this sense of possibility, it cannot become possible at any time at all. It follows that this renewed (*mutajaddid*) possibility is an existent thing (*amr wujūdī*) […].[31] It precedes the existence of [the thing that comes to

29 For instance, Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, IV.2, 175–176; *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.I.12, 77.

30 See pp. 141–142 below.

31 A full stop is needed after *bi-l-zawāl*.

> be]. For unless this possibility—by which I mean complete preparedness (*al-istiʿdād al-tāmm*)—is realised, it will be impossible of existence.[32]

A particular potentiality that comes about in a substrate and makes it receptive to a particular form is a disposition (*hay'a*) of that substrate, and as such is an accident in the category of quality (*kayfiyya*). The disposition of the substrate is referred to as 'preparedness', while the restricted privation it brings about is what is properly denoted by 'possibility'.[33] Depending on the degree of preparedness of a substrate for a particular substantial or accidental form, which follows from the activities of preparatory causes (*muʿidd*), the potentiality for that substrate to receive that form may be 'remote' (*quwwa baʿīda*) or proximate. The potentiality of a substrate for the form may initially be remote, but then develop until the substrate acquires complete preparedness to receive it, at which point that form will become possible of existence in the substrate.

So, for example, the simple elements have the potentiality to be a full-grown man, yet this potentiality is extremely 'remote'. The potentiality is much more proximate in semen, and it becomes increasingly proximate as an embryo develops, until it becomes very proximate as the entity develops into a boy. Al-Ṭūsī remarks that just as the potentiality for a thing varies in its proximity and remoteness, so too the possibility of the thing varies in the same way, such that even a remote potentiality for a thing constitutes, to an extent, a possibility for it, though in a comparatively indeterminate way. He writes:

> The possibilities of these things [that come to be] are present before they exist, and they are designated as 'potentiality'. So it is said that these existents are in their substrates *in potentia*. They vary with respect to remoteness and proximity, and come to an end when the existents come from potentiality into act. The designation 'possibility' applies to them by gradation (*bi-l-tashkīk*).[34]

Once complete preparedness for a thing obtains and the substrate is said to contain the possibility for it, the immanent thing will be brought into being by the agency of its metaphysical efficient cause. After it comes to pass, the thing will become actual, rather than potential, and the possibility that preceded it in its substrate will come to an end. As Bahmanyār writes:

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32 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 56.

33 On preparedness as an accident of quality, see Avicenna, *Manṭiq*, II.V, 167 ff.

34 Al-Ṭūsī, *Ḥall*, 3, 81.

> Know that the possibility that passes away at the actualisation [of the thing] has a cause. So, without a doubt, it comes to be in time (*ḥādith*), and it is preceded temporally by another possibility, [and so forth] *ad infinitum*.[35]

Even though dispositional possibility passes away at the coming-to-be of the thing, the thing itself, as al-Rāzī's above-quoted passage explains, will remain possible on account of its *per se* possibility, which is concomitant to its essence. The colour black will always be possible by virtue of its essence, whether there are multiple instantiations thereof—each of which will accordingly be possible in itself—or none.

Although Avicenna himself does not employ the term 'dispositional possibility' (*imkān istiʿdādī*), the concept is nonetheless already present in his system, as I have shown. To my knowledge, he was the first to develop this concept, his prime motive arguably being to integrate the theory of potentiality into his modal metaphysics.[36] Yet, the fact that he uses one and the same term, 'possibility', in different contexts to refer to different concepts of possibility led to considerable confusion among some of his 5th/11th- and 6th/12th-century readers, to whom we shall now turn. The resultant debate called for some refinement, which eventually took the form of the introduction of the clear-cut distinction afforded by the terms '*per se* possibility' and 'dispositional possibility'.

4.2 Al-Ghazālī: An Ashʿarī Rejoinder

Avicenna's theory, that the possibility of a thing that comes to be is real and that it inheres in a substrate, is afforded a fair amount of attention in al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*. Earlier studies emphasise (1) that the criticism levelled by al-Ghazālī at this aspect of Avicenna's metaphysics shifts the narrative by countering the Avicennan theory with a very different conception of possibility, and (2) that the alternative conception he proposes is more or less novel.[37] While I agree with the former point, I will argue briefly that al-Ghazālī's criticism overall is

35 Bahmanyār, *Taḥṣīl*, 483.

36 For a contemporary formulation of dispositional modality, see Anjum and Mumford, 'Dispositional modality'.

37 In particular, Kukkonen, 'Possible Worlds in the *Tahâfut al-Falâsifa*'; Dutton, 'Al-Ghazālī on Possibility and the Critique of Causality'. See also the overview of recent scholarship in Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*, 157 ff.

wide off the mark and rests on a misreading of the Avicennan position. On the second point, I will explain that the alternative conception of possibility he proposes is part and parcel of the classical Ashʿarī understanding of possibility.[38]

The problem is broached in the First Discussion in the *Tahāfut*, dedicated to refuting the philosophers' doctrine of the pre-eternity of the world. Al-Ghazālī discusses four arguments used to support this doctrine, the fourth of which is Avicenna's argument for the pre-eternity of the world from dispositional possibility. After a brief summary of this argument, the ensuing discussion consists of al-Ghazālī's objection, a possible Avicennan defence mooted in response, and finally al-Ghazālī's response to this possible defence. The objection proceeds as follows:

> The possibility they [i.e. Avicenna] refer to reduces to a judgement of the mind. Anything whose existence the mind postulates, and does not find impossible to postulate, we call 'possible'. If it finds it impossible [to postulate its existence], we call it 'impossible'. If it is unable to postulate its nonexistence, we call it 'necessary'. These are all judgements of the mind, which do not require an existent so as to be explained as an attribute thereof.[39]

There are two salient points here. First, modal terms are defined in terms of the conceivability and inconceivability of things, and are not associated to essences, in contrast to Avicenna. What al-Ghazālī proposes, hence, is a model of synchronic alternative possibilities, according to which, at any given moment, an actual state of affairs is contingent, since one or more alternative states of affairs are conceivable and equally possible.[40] (This position is often

38 It should be noted here that although al-Ghazālī rejects Avicenna's conception of possibility-in-matter, and nowhere (at least in his main works) approves of the Aristotelian theory of potentiality, he nonetheless upholds a theory that, in some respects, is analogous. He maintains that created things may serve as conditions for an occurrence, which may then be created directly, and voluntarily, by the God (Daiber, 'God versus Causality'; Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*, 222 ff.; cf. Shihadeh, *Teleological Ethics*, Chapter 1, where I show that al-Rāzī holds a comparable theory). Al-Ghazālī's position is a development of the classical Ashʿarī conception of 'conditions' (*sharṭ*) (to which I return briefly on p. 124, n. 45 below), probably under the influence of Avicenna's discussions of preparatory causes. Al-Ghazālī, of course, also maintains that God can create things out of nothing, without prior conditions.

39 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 70–71.

40 On this, see Kukkonen, 'Possible Worlds in the *Tahâfut al-Falâsifa*'.

contrasted to the so-called 'statistical' conception of possibility prevalent in the Aristotelian tradition; however, as I shall explain, this is not really at issue in the debate at hand.) Second, modal judgements are not anchored in real and irreducible attributes of things in the external world. Al-Ghazālī reiterates the latter point a little later, and explains how, for instance, the judgement, 'X is possible', can be a knowledge-item (*ʿilm*), even though there is no extra-mental object of knowledge (*maʿlūm*) to which the predicate corresponds. There is indeed an object of knowledge, he submits, but it is present only in the mind, not in the external world of objects. For the subject X in the statement, 'X is possible', is properly speaking the mental representation of X; so the judgement too should accordingly be present in the mind.[41] This account of the modalities appears rather vague in some respects, but it becomes clearer once we have considered earlier Ashʿarī doctrines, in which it is rooted.

Briefly put, the classical Ashʿarī conception of possibility is based in the theory of what constitutes a thing (*shayʾ*) and what constitutes an object of knowledge (*maʿlūm*).[42] A thing, according to Ashʿarīs, must be existent (*mawjūd*) in the external world. An object of knowledge, however, can be either existent or nonexistent (*maʿdūm*), and is strictly speaking a representation in the mind. To constitute a knowledge-item (*ʿilm*), the object of knowledge present in the mind must be associated with the correct judgement (*ḥukm*) of either (1) affirmation (*ithbāt*), if the object of knowledge corresponds to an existent thing in the external world or to a true state of affairs, or (2) negation (*nafy*), if it does not correspond to an existent thing or to a true state of affairs. So, for instance, my affirmation of myself and my negation of a horse in the adjacent room are both knowledge-items, since I exist and there is in fact no horse in the adjacent room: both I and the horse are thus objects of knowledge. Since nonexistents are endless, there can potentially be an infinite number of objects of knowledge. All are known to God, but only a finite amount of knowledge-items are known to any human being at any given time.

Now, suppose I reflect on a given object of knowledge, one that corresponds to an actual state of affairs. I can then juxtapose it in my mind with conceivable alternative states of affairs, which are hypothetical, but nonetheless, as I have just explained, constitute knowledge-items. If I compare all these actual and hypothetical states of affairs, it may become evident to me that they are all in themselves equally possible. In view of this realisation, I can then pass

41 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 72; 74–75.

42 On this, see Frank, 'The Nonexistent and the Possible in Classical Ashʿarite Teaching'.

a judgement on each of these objects of knowledge, including the one that corresponds to external reality: namely, that the object of knowledge is possible (*jāʾiz, yaṣiḥḥu*).

One of the most prominent and important applications in which this conception of possibility finds clear expression in classical Ashʿarī sources is the context of proving the existence of God using the principle of particularisation (*takhṣīṣ*). If multiple alternative states of affairs are equally possible, but if only one of them is actual at a given moment, then one may ask, what makes an actual state of affairs, utterly contingent though it may be, actual? Here is how this question is tackled by al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085), as he concludes his discussion on proving the existence of God in the *Shāmil*:

> Proofs [for the existence of the Creator] may differ in their formulation and wording. However, they all hinge on […] that a possible characteristic must depend on a particulariser (*al-ḥukm al-jāʾiz yataʿallaqu bi-mukhaṣṣiṣ*). The proof can then start from [the dichotomy of] existence and nonexistence, such that the two are set as possible alternatives. It can also start from the temporal precedence or antecedence of temporal occurrences. Or it can start from the specific types of attributes and the diverse shapes and structures characteristic of [particular] bodies.
>
> In all cases, the proof can be set out using the foregoing disjunction,[43] as follows: Necessarily, what is temporally precedent is in fact precedent, and the shapes and forms particularised are in fact particularised, either on account of the thing itself, or an accident, or particularisation [by a separate particulariser], or the possibility [of the actual state of affairs], or not by a cause at all. If you set out the argument as we have described, you will find that it is sound and leads to truth.[44]

Whether it is the existence or nonexistence of an entity, the time of its coming-to-be, the accidents that inhere in a body, the arrangement of the body's atoms, the location of an atom, etc., all of these states of affairs are contingent. Whatever state of affairs one postulates, there will be nothing inherent in that state of affairs itself—neither the class of the entity involved (e.g. an atom, an accident of the colour red, or an accident of heat), nor some accident or other present in that state of affairs—that makes it actual. The explanation, therefore, must

43 Al-Juwaynī discusses this disjunction earlier in the section. He eliminates all disjuncts except particularisation, as I shall explain next.

44 Al-Juwaynī, *Shāmil*, 272.

lie in an external factor, which is here argued to be God's power (*qudra*). Divine power, according to Ashʿarīs, is the particulariser that actualises some of God's objects of knowledge (in other words, some possibilities) to the exclusion of others. This view, of course, presupposes an occasionalist worldview according to which accidents lack continued existence and are created at each moment directly by God; so there is no real causal nexus between one moment and the next, though God generally preserves the normal order of events (*ʿāda*).

This, in a nutshell, is the backdrop against which al-Ghazālī proposes, in the First Discussion of the *Tahāfut*, his alternative account of possibility to counter Avicenna's. Like his Ashʿarī predecessors, he advocates a conception of synchronic alternative possibilities; and he maintains that the assertion, 'X is possible', is a knowledge-item in which both the object of knowledge and the judgement are present in the mind, rather than in the external world.[45] As already

45 Having contended that the conception of possibility that al-Ghazālī advances in the First Discussion of the *Tahāfut* corresponds to the classical Ashʿarī conception, I must remark briefly on another discussion, which has widely been interpreted as indicating that his views on modality in this text betray a philosophical influence (for a discussion, with references to earlier studies, see Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*, 158 ff.). In the Seventeenth Discussion, he addresses the question whether God can do the impossible, and writes: 'The impossible consists in [1] affirming a thing while negating it; [2] affirming the more specific while negating the more general; or [3] affirming two [things] while negating one [of them]. What does not reduce to this is not impossible' (*Tahāfut*, 293; Marmura's translation with adjustments, 179). Again, this account of impossibility in fact accords with earlier Ashʿarī views, and of itself does not attest philosophical influence. The first type of impossibility is that a thing cannot, at the same time, both exist and not exist, or have a certain attribute and not have it. This principle is already well-attested in earlier *kalām* sources (al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 10). For the second type, al-Ghazālī gives two examples, namely, that for an entity to have volition (which is more specific) it must already possess knowledge (which is more general), and that for an entity to have knowledge (more specific) it must already possess life (more general) (*Tahāfut*, 293–294). This has been read as an acceptance of the Aristotelian 'view that substances are to be classified conceptually and that the properties of the more general must be found in the more specific' (Goodman, *Avicenna*, 187). However, what al-Ghazālī expresses is actually the standard *kalām* principle that if attribute A is a general condition (*sharṭ*) for a more specific attribute B, it will be impossible for B to exist in the absence of A. For instance, life is a condition for all other attributes specific to animate beings (*ṣifāt al-ḥayy*), such as knowledge and volition; so it is impossible for a rock to have knowledge (Shihadeh, 'Classical Ashʿarī Anthropology', 443–449). On the basis of this principle, theologians argue that since God has knowledge and volition, He necessarily has life. Al-Ghazālī does not explain the third type of impossibility, perhaps as it seems self-explanatory.

He then addresses the philosophical challenge that, according to Ashʿarī occasional-

noted, what al-Ghazālī intends to counter here is not the diachronic theory of possibility prevalent in the Aristotelian tradition, but rather Avicenna's claim that the possibility of a thing that comes to be has extra-mental existence and must inhere in a substrate before the thing's coming-to-be, which, of course, derives from the Aristotelian theory of potentiality. Al-Ghazālī's objection, however, rests on two assumptions: first, that Avicenna has only one, rather simple account of possibility; second, that possibility is *either* in the external world *or* in the mind. As I have explained, Avicenna sees no mutual contradiction between the notion that possibility is, in one respect, a mental judgement and his assertion that the possibility of things that come to be must be present in a substrate.

After advancing his own position on the modalities, al-Ghazālī adduces three arguments that support this position and contest Avicenna's claim that possibility requires a substrate. Only the second and third arguments are of interest to us here. The first is an *ad hominem* argument that sheds no light on the author's own position or his reading of Avicenna.

Al-Ghazālī's second argument is that before the colour black comes to be in a given body, we know that it is possible in itself. If this possibility is a relation to the body upon which this accident supervenes, then it will be nothing more than the possibility *for* the body to become black. Possibility, consequently, will be an attribute of the body, rather than of the colour black, which will not be possible in itself. Yet we already know that blackness is possible in itself; so it follows that its possibility does not require the presence of some other thing to which it needs to be related.[46] The philosophers, we are told, believe that if the colour black is considered in abstraction from any substrate in which it may inhere, it will be impossible; for it can only be possible in itself if its possibility occurs in a body.[47] Al-Ghazālī's argument is deeply problematic, as it assumes that from the absence of possibility for blackness in

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ism, God would be able to 'alter the realities of things' (*qalb al-ajnās*). The term '*jins*' here is used in the classical *kalām* sense of a simple class of entities, such as the atom, the colour black, capacity and motion; so it is inaccurate and misleading to render it as 'genus', as in Marmura's translation (p. 179) and some recent studies. The problem of 'whether the realities of entities can be altered', which we shall not discuss here, originates in earlier *kalām*, and al-Ghazālī's response to the philosophers' objection coincides with classical Ashʿarī views (*Tahāfut*, 294–295; cf. al-Juwaynī, *Shāmil*, 150). The fact that he gives a hylomorphic example to illustrate his general point does not in itself attest a commitment to hylomorphism.

46 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 71.

47 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 73.

any substrate, Avicenna infers the impossibility of blackness absolutely. This, as I explained earlier, is not the case. Blackness, according to Avicenna, is possible in itself absolutely and unconditionally, on account of its essence, regardless of whether or not any substrates presently are black or have the possibility to become black. A particular instantiation of blackness, however, is possible or impossible conditionally, depending on whether or not a particular substrate presently possesses the (dispositional) possibility to become black. If *this* particular body possesses the potentiality to become black, then blackness in itself will be possible of existence *now* and *in* this body. If not, then blackness in itself will presently be impossible of existence *in* this body.

The third argument—a *reductio ad absurdum*—is that the rational soul, according to Avicenna, is an immaterial substance, which comes to be in time. The soul, however, does not come to be in a material substrate. So, if the possibility of a thing that comes to be is a relation that precedes the thing's existence, and if it is not a relation to the agent's power, which produces the thing, then there will be nothing to which the possibility of the soul can be related—meaning, that before it comes to be, the soul cannot be possible and accordingly cannot come to be.[48] Al-Ghazālī then considers Avicenna's view that the rational soul's possibility is a relation to the matter of the body that the soul will become connected to and manage, even though it will not subsist in that matter.[49] However, the possibility of managing the body, he responds, is a 'remote relation' (*iḍāfa baʿīda*) for the rational soul—that is to say, it is more remote than the relation between a thing and the substrate in which it becomes 'imprinted'. If such a remote relation is deemed sufficient for establishing the possibility of the soul before it comes to be, then it seems no less apt to assume that this possibility arises out of the agent's capacity to create a soul. There is no difference in proximity, al-Ghazālī avers, between the soul's relation to its efficient cause (that is, the agent's power) and its relation to the patient (the body), since the soul is imprinted in neither.[50]

This last argument seeks to refute Avicenna's theory that a thing that comes to be must be preceded by a substrate, but also lends credence to the Ashʿarī doctrine that God's power can create things *ex nihilo*, which al-Ghazālī defended. It is, however, an *ad hominem* argument, since it does not presuppose a commitment to the doctrine of the rational soul, which in this context is conceded purely for the sake of argument.[51]

48 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 71–72.

49 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 73–74.

50 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 76–77.

51 Al-Ghazālī, however, does subscribe to this doctrine, though he does not state this explic-

4.3 Al-Masʿūdī on the Ontology of Possibility (Problem 10)

The debate is pursued further in Section 10 of al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk*, mainly, as will soon become clear, under the influence of al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*. After quoting *Ishārāt* II.5.6 in full (cited on p. 114 above), al-Masʿūdī starts by briefly clarifying Avicenna's ultimate goal in the passage:

> His objective (*gharaḍ*) is to show that prime matter is pre-eternal and does not come to be in time. For, if it were temporally generated, the possibility of its coming-to-be would have obtained before its coming-to-be, and this possibility would have been present in some matter other than [this matter]. The series [of material substrates] would thereby regress *ad infinitum*. Therefore, there necessarily must be matter that does not come to be, at which the series terminates. However, the account that he provides is too condensed (*mujmal*); and once it is investigated, it will become evident to fair-minded people that it falls short of serving its[52] aforementioned objective.[53]

So, the Avicennan theory of the possibility of generable things serves as a premise for the doctrine that matter is pre-eternal. The fact that al-Masʿūdī highlights, at the outset, the latter doctrine as Avicenna's objective suggests that his interest lies chiefly in the theological import of the passage at hand. His own objective, as he indicates here, is to subject Avicenna's terse and elliptical passage to closer scrutiny, but only in order to expose its failure to fulfil its ultimate objective. So, although in the ensuing discussion al-Masʿūdī focuses on the ontological status of possibility and does not return explicitly to the question of the pre-eternity of matter, his true aim and motive is to refute the latter doctrine.

This is not the only hint in the passage at a possible Ghazālian influence. A salient feature of the discussion in the *Tahāfut* is that it offers an incomplete account of Avicenna's argument for the pre-eternity of the world from dispositional possibility. It was noted towards the beginning of the present chapter that Avicenna argues that if we postulate that matter came to be at some point in the past, then we will be forced to concede, on two counts,

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itly in the *Tahāfut*. See Shihadeh, 'Al-Ghazālī and *Kalām*: The Conundrum of His Body-Soul Dualism'.

52 Or, alternatively, 'his'.

53 *Shukūk*, 270.

that matter must have pre-existed this point in time.[54] For, first, the first form received by the temporally generated matter postulated, once it came to be, must have been preceded by the possibility of its existence, and this possibility would have required a material substrate to inhere in. Second, the possibility of the matter postulated to have come to be must have preceded its existence, and hence would have required a further material substrate to inhere in. On both counts, it seems that there was matter before the coming-to-be of what is postulated to be the first bit of matter; but this violates our initial hypothesis that matter came to be *ex nihilo*. Now, in the *Tahāfut*, al-Ghazālī for some reason considers only the latter of these two sub-arguments, omitting any mention of the former.[55] Apparently influenced by his predecessor's defective account of the argument, al-Masʿūdī does exactly the same in his above-quoted interpretation of Avicenna's passage. He only considers the possibility that must pre-exist the coming-to-be of matter, but neglects to mention the possibility that must pre-exist what is postulated to be the first form in existence.[56]

Proceeding with his critique, al-Masʿūdī analyses Avicenna's claim that 'everything that comes to be must be possible of existence prior to its existence'. This, he reasons, can be understood in either of two ways.[57] The first is that prior to its coming-to-be, a thing cannot be 'necessarily nonexistent', which is to say that it cannot be impossible of existence. This is the possibility of the thing in itself (*imkān al-shay' fī dhāti-hi*), or what I have termed *per se* possibility.[58] Al-Masʿūdī's one-sided definition of 'possible' as 'not necessarily nonexistent', as opposed to the two-sided definition (namely, 'neither necessarily existent nor necessarily nonexistent', in other words 'contingent') seems apt, considering that the discussion centres on the possibility of things that come to be after not having existed, which obviously excludes things necessary of existence.[59] The second sense of possibility is that prior to a thing's coming-to-be, there must be preparedness for its existence—in other words, what I have termed dispositional possibility, or natural possibility.

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54 See p. 110 above.

55 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 69, ll. 10–13. By contrast, only the former, traditional Aristotelian sub-argument appears in his *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* (129–130).

56 The same is true of Ibn Ghaylān's reading of *Ishārāt* II.5.6 (*Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, 82), an influence from either al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*, al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk*, or both.

57 *Shukūk*, 271.

58 *Shukūk*, 272.

59 On one-sided and two-sided possibility, see Avicenna, *Manṭiq*, IV.I.4, 33–35; *Najāt*, 30–33.

Al-Masʿūdī begins with the former, *per se* type of possibility. If possibility is defined in this way, then he has no quarrel with the view that whatever comes to be must indeed be possible in itself before its coming-to-be:

> If by ['possibility', Avicenna] intends the former sense, then there is no objection to that. However, possibility in this sense is not a realised and existent thing, so that we could seek out its reality—whether it is the power of a capable agent, or a thing that is intelligible in itself and does not require a subject, or a thing that [inheres] in a subject. Rather, the meaning of this possibility is the negation of necessary nonexistence; yet the negation of necessity is not an existent thing.[60]

This objection clearly takes its cue from the main criticism deployed in al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*, yet with a crucial improvement. Unlike his predecessor, al-Masʿūdī does not simply assume that Avicenna has only one definition for possibility, which he uses across the board, but takes the extra step of considering two different conceptions of possibility. So far, he rules out only one of these two readings: If by 'possibility' we mean general, *per se* possibility, then generable things must indeed be possible before their coming-to-be; their possibility, nonetheless, has no reality in the external world of objects.

This type of possibility, al-Masʿūdī goes on to explain, is absolute and associated with essences, rather than with the existence of any particular instantiations of an essence. 'Before things become existent, their essences are in themselves distinct from each other', and they fall into two classes.[61] Some essences are impossible of existence—these, al-Masʿūdī writes, are termed 'impossible' (*mumtaniʿ*, *muḥāl*), 'inconceivable' (*ghayr mutaṣawwar*), or 'not possible'. Other essences are not impossible of existence, and are termed 'possible' (*mumkin*), 'conceivable' (*mutaṣawwar*), or 'not impossible'. What we have here, however, is a rather puzzling characterisation of modality. On the one hand, possibility is associated with essence, which, of course, presupposes an acceptance of the theory of essences—possible essences are not mere mental constructs, but have a presence in the mind and correspondingly exist in concrete particulars in the extra-mental world. (In an earlier section of the *Shukūk*, incidentally, al-Masʿūdī attacks Avicenna's theory of mental existence.[62]) On the

60 *Shukūk*, 271.

61 *Shukūk*, 272.

62 He writes in Section 6 (*Shukūk*, 246): 'The assertion, that "[universals] exist in the mind", is a conventional and widely held opinion. However, once we investigate it, we will find

other hand, possibility is equated with conceivability, and impossibility with inconceivability, which divorces possibility from essence and greatly broadens its scope. From an Avicennan point of view, conceivable things are frequently impossible of existence—for example, a phoenix, or a flying human being. So it might seem that al-Masʿūdī was influenced, to an extent, by the classical *kalām* conception of possibility, understood in terms of alternative states of affairs. According to this understanding, we can conceptualise both a horse and a phoenix, and ascertain that neither conception postulated and imagined involves a contradiction; so we must regard both conceptions as possible of existence, and if God so wishes He can create such entities. However, a little later in Section 10, al-Masʿūdī defines 'impossibility' as 'the negation of the conceivability of existence (*salb taṣawwur al-wujūd*)', which suggests that possibility cannot be defined by conceivability alone.[63] I can conceive of a phoenix, for instance; but can I conceive of it actually existing in the external world? I suspect al-Masʿūdī would have answered this question in the negative on the grounds that a phoenix is impossible of existence on account of its essence. We must leave it at this, however, in view of the fact that the *Shukūk* does not provide us enough details to reconstruct a fuller or more consistent account of al-Masʿūdī's understanding of the modalities.

At any rate, al-Masʿūdī proceeds from the association he underscores between modalities and essences to argue that a modal term is said of an essence *per se* even before the coming-to-be of any concrete instantiations thereof in the external world. Since an essence has no existence other than its existence in concrete particulars, it will be possible even when it is nonexistent. (And since, as mentioned, al-Masʿūdī rejects Avicenna's theory of mental existence, the mental cognisance of an essence does not confer existence on it.) An existent attribute, however, cannot inhere in a nonexistent thing; therefore, possibility cannot be an existent attribute of a nonexistent essence. Possible and impossible essences are equivalent in this regard: just as the impossibility related to a

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that what it means is different from what we understand by existence proper. For "the thing's existing in the mind" means nothing other than its being known by, intelligible to, and apprehended by, the intellect. As to the reality of existence, it is that through which the realities of essences obtain in concrete particulars (*fī l-aʿyān*). There is no meaning to "existence" other than this. The thing's existing in the mind has a meaning other than this meaning—namely, its being known to the intellect.' This position presupposes an earlier discussion in the book, in Sections 4 and 5, where al-Masʿūdī argues against the theory that knowledge involves a form being imprinted in the knower's mind.

63 *Shukūk*, 273.

nonexistent essence is not a real attribute that inheres therein, so also the possibility related to a nonexistent essence cannot be a real attribute found in the external world.[64]

So, if the *per se* possibility of an essence does not have an extra-mental existence before an instantiation thereof comes to be (nor, for that matter, even after its coming-to-be), then what of dispositional possibility? Al-Masʿūdī writes that if 'possibility', in *Ishārāt* II.5.6, is understood in the sense of preparedness, then Avicenna's claim—that this possibility must obtain before a thing comes to be—cannot be conceded absolutely, but only with qualification.[65] Beings that come to be in time, he reasons, fall into two classes. Some things can only exist if they inhere in a substrate; and the would-be substrate of such a thing must indeed be prepared to receive it before it comes to be. Preparedness, in this case, must obtain prior to the thing's existence—'there is no disagreement on this', al-Masʿūdī remarks. Other things, however, do not require a substrate to exist in:

> If the thing that comes to be does not require a substrate to exist in, then preparedness for its existence (*istiʿdād wujūdi-hi*) need not obtain before it comes to be. You need to provide proof that such a temporally generated thing is possible of existence in this sense.[66]

This point is made briefly in the middle of the section and can easily go unnoticed. However, it deserves to be unpacked, as it is in fact a key objection that al-Masʿūdī makes to Avicenna's argument for the pre-eternity of matter from dispositional possibility. It will be remembered that when he proves that the coming-to-be of a generable thing must be preceded by its dispositional possibility, Avicenna begins by setting up a dichotomous disjunction: a thing, he argues, either subsists in another, or is self-subsistent. Either way, a substrate must pre-exist the thing's coming-to-be.[67] Yet this is a disjunction that al-Masʿūdī would describe as non-exhaustive (*ghayr ḥāṣir*).[68] By contrast, the disjunction al-Masʿūdī himself proposes is exhaustive, as it rests on a straightforward affirmation and negation: a thing either subsists in another, or does not subsist in another. The latter class of things includes, not only self-subsistent

64 *Shukūk*, 272.
65 *Shukūk*, 271.
66 *Shukūk*, 271.
67 See Section 4.1 above.
68 As he does elsewhere: *Shukūk*, 268–269; see pp. 104–105 above.

things, but also matter. Now, matter neither subsists in another, nor is self-subsistent, yet Avicenna treats it in his argument in the same way he treats a thing that subsists in another. It seems inapt to start from the notion that when a substantial form or an accident comes to be, it must be preceded by a substrate that has a preparedness (that is, a dispositional possibility) to receive it, to conclude, straightforwardly, that if prime matter were temporally generated, it too must be preceded by a substrate and dispositional possibility, considering (*a*) that prime matter not only does not inhere in a substrate, but moreover (*b*) is pure potentiality and lacks any actuality of itself. Al-Masʿūdī thus appears right to underscore this lacuna in Avicenna's reasoning, and to demand a proof tailored specifically to matter.

That said, this objection offers an incomplete response to Avicenna's argument for the pre-eternity of matter. It confronts the argument as interpreted by our commentator, probably, as we have seen, under the influence of al-Ghazālī. An Avicennist would still be able to establish the pre-eternity of matter, as noted earlier, on the grounds that any form that comes to be in a material substrate must be preceded by the presence of its dispositional possibility in the same substrate.

Al-Masʿūdī further disputes Avicenna's claim, in the context of *Ishārāt* II.5.6, that 'if [a thing] is not possible of existence before it comes to be, it will be impossible of existence'.[69] 'But on what basis do you assert this (*wa-lima qultum dhālika*)?', he challenges in typical *kalām* manner, before accusing Avicenna of confusing two senses of possibility: dispositional possibility and *per se* possibility (that is, the possibility of the thing 'in itself', *fī nafsi-hi*, as Avicenna writes).

As to possibility in the former sense of preparedness, al-Masʿūdī confirms that before an accident comes to be in a subject, or a substantial form comes to be in matter, the accident or form necessarily requires (*lā budda*) the presence of prior preparedness in that subject or matter. In both cases, this preparedness will be an attribute of the substrate in which it obtains. Al-Masʿūdī has no objection to designating this attribute as 'possibility', as it would be apt to say, for example, 'This subject bears the possibility for the inherence of such and such an accident therein (*fī-hi imkān qiyām al-ʿaraḍ bi-hi*)', or 'This parcel of matter bears the possibility for the existence of such and such a form therein'.[70] Note here that both statements refer to the possibility that a subject has for an

69 *Shukūk*, 271.

70 *Shukūk*, 272.

accident or form, rather than the possibility of the accident or form in itself. Possibility in this sense, al-Masʿūdī goes on to explain, should not be confused with absolute *per se* possibility. He writes:

> To know if a thing is possible in itself (*fī dhāti-hi*) or impossible in itself, we do not need to investigate the conditions of all beings, such that if we find one among them that has the preparedness to receive it we affirm that it is possible in itself, and if we do not find that we deem [the thing] to be impossible in itself. Rather, we know the possibility of the thing in itself or its impossibility in itself without considering the condition of other things.[71]

The colour black, for example, is possible in itself regardless of whether or not there is a subject presently in existence that contains the preparedness to receive this colour. And if we hypothesise a colour that is both black and white at the same time, it will be impossible of existence on account of the impossibility of the essence postulated, rather than due to our hunch that no being in existence has a preparedness to receive it—for a substrate can only receive a thing that is possible in itself to begin with. Al-Masʿūdī here fleshes out the opening complaint in the section: that *per se* possibility, which is linked to essence *tout court*, does not inhabit the external world.

The upshot of al-Masʿūdī's account of these two senses of possibility is that Avicenna, as already pointed out, confuses them by equating the absence of dispositional possibility with the negation of *per se* possibility. Our critic goes even further, and submits that what we have here are not two more or less nuanced senses of the same concept, but two fundamentally different concepts. He writes:

> If we assign the noun 'possibility' to this preparedness, then the noun 'possibility' will be common to two meanings (*mushtarak bayna maʿnayayn*). Possibility, in the meaning of preparedness, certainly requires a substrate to exist in. As to possibility in the former meaning [that is, *per se* possibility], it does not require a substrate to exist in. For it is not an existent thing (*amr wujūdī*), but is rather a negative notion (*amr salbī*), as it means that [a thing] is not necessarily nonexistent. So it is the negation of necessary nonexistence, while impossibility is the negation of the conceivability of existence (*salb taṣawwur al-wujūd*). Everything that comes to be, before it

71 *Shukūk*, 272.

> becomes existent, is possible of existence in the former [*per se*] meaning, but not in the latter meaning, [i.e. preparedness].[72]

So the expression 'possible' is 'common' to two meanings (a case of so-called *ishtirāk lafẓī*); and since the two meanings appear related, we can say that it is a polysemous term. Despite the conceptual relation between the two conceptions denoted by the term, the realities they refer to are distinct. One meaning is preparedness, which has a reality in the external world. The other meaning is *per se* possibility, and it has no reality in the external world.[73] Avicenna's fault, according to al-Masʿūdī, lies in his failure to make a distinction between the two.

Al-Masʿūdī is right to highlight the ambiguity of Avicenna's account of the possibility in things that come to be. By my reading of this account, however, the accusation that Avicenna confuses the two senses of possibility does not hold. For, as I explained earlier in the present chapter, the expression 'possible in itself' in *Ishārāt* II.5.6 and corresponding discussions in other Avicennan works refers to particular *per se* possibility, rather than to universal *per se* possibility, and as such is the flipside of dispositional possibility. When he claims that unless substrate S contains the possibility to receive, say, form F, F will be impossible of existence *in itself*, he does not mean that F-ness will be absolutely impossible, but simply that a *particular instantiation* of F-ness is impossible *in S*. Although F *per se* will be impossible in S, F *per se* may still be possible absolutely.

Al-Masʿūdī's characterisation of *per se* possibility as 'a negative notion' (*amr salbī*), as opposed to an 'existent thing' (*amr wujūdī*), is noteworthy. In Section 8 of the *Shukūk*, he characterises necessity in the same way:

> The expression 'necessary of existence' (*wājib al-wujūd*) may give the false impression that [necessity of existence] is an existent thing and that necessity of existence has a reality that obtains and exists over and above [the thing's] existence (*ḥaqīqa muḥaṣṣala thābita warā' al-wujūd*). This is not the case. For what we understand by the expression 'necessary of existence' is nothing other than [the thing's] being an uncaused existent, that its existence does not obtain from another, and that it is impossible for it to be nonexistent. So the necessity of existence is the absence of need

72 *Shukūk*, 273.

73 Characterising possibility and necessity as 'negations' is a borrowing from al-Ghazālī (for instance, *Tahāfut*, 144–145; cf. 138–139; see also pp. 141–142 below).

> for a cause to confer existence. This is a sheer negation and is absolutely nonexistent (*salb maḥḍ wa-ʿadam ṣirf*). It has no reality that obtains and exists, which is different from [the thing's] existence and is additional to [its] existence.[74]

The background of this view goes beyond the scope of our present chapter. The bottom line, however, is that al-Masʿūdī espouses a tidy position on the ontology of the modalities. Neither *per se* necessity nor *per se* possibility is a real and irreducible attribute of things themselves, as they are defined in negative terms and by reference to causation. Necessity of existence is definable in terms of both uncausedness and the negation of nonexistence; possibility of existence is definable in terms of causedness and the negation of the impossibility of existence.

Al-Masʿūdī wraps up the section by revealing, and paying homage to, his main source of inspiration. He writes:

> All of this [i.e. his own criticism of *Ishārāt* II.5.6] finds support in what the Imām al-Ghazālī—may he be blissful—provided in the *Tahāfut* in response to their [i.e. the philosophers', particularly Avicenna's] views on this question. They are all powerful objections (*ishkāl*), and very much on target.[75]

The reference is clearly to al-Ghazālī's criticism of the fourth philosophical argument for the pre-eternity of the world confuted in the First Discussion in the *Tahāfut*, which we treated earlier. Al-Masʿūdī summarises only one of his predecessor's objections, namely, the objection from the possibility of the rational soul. The summary reflects the same organisation as the original: the initial objection is appended by a philosophical defence (*ʿudhr*, the same term used in the *Tahāfut*), which is then followed by a final and conclusive response.[76] Al-Ghazālī, we are told, begins by arguing that the human soul comes to be after not having existed, and is possible of existence before its coming-to-be. However, since the soul exists separately from matter, the possibility that precedes its existence cannot exist in a material substrate, which contradicts the Avicennan doctrine that the possibility of a thing that comes to be must inhere in a substrate prior to its coming-to-be. An Avicennist, as al-Masʿūdī points out,

74 *Shukūk*, 252–253.

75 *Shukūk*, 273.

76 Cf. p. 126 above.

would defend his position by explaining that the possibility of existence of the rational soul does precede its coming-to-be, and does inhere in matter; this, however, is not the matter of a would-be substrate for the soul, but that of the incipient human body that would later be governed by the soul. These first two steps—the criticism and the defence—coincide accurately with the original discussion in the *Tahāfut*. However, the third step does not, but goes as follows. The Avicennist response, it is argued, is unsound:

> For the possibility that precedes [the soul's] coming-to-be is not a thing that comes to be. For before they come to be, souls have constantly been possible of existence. However, the preparedness of the body to be managed by the soul, and for [the soul] to become connected to it, is something that comes to be with the coming-to-be of the body. So this preparedness does not exist before the existence of the body. If the possibility that precedes its coming-to-be is this preparedness, then before the existence of the body the soul is not possible of existence in itself. So it was impossible in itself, then became possible. It is obvious that such a view is false.[77]

This argument does not apply specifically to the immaterial human soul, but can appeal to any other sort of temporally originated thing. It corresponds, not to al-Ghazālī's response to the Avicennan defence, but rather to the main point of contention raised in al-Masʿūdī's commentary on *Ishārāt* II.5.6, as we have seen. Al-Masʿūdī's intention here seems to be, not simply to recapitulate al-Ghazālī's reasoning, but to illustrate how his own objection concurs with, and develops, his predecessor's line of criticism.

4.4 Al-Masʿūdī on the Indestructibility of the Human Soul (Problem 14)

The relation between Avicenna's theories of the immateriality of the human soul and dispositional possibility is revisited in Section 14 of the *Shukūk*, titled 'That the human soul cannot possibly pass away'. The question immediately at issue here is not the possibility of the coming-to-be of the soul, but the possibility of its passing away, although, as we shall see, al-Masʿūdī invokes the former problem in his commentary.

The Avicennan passage targeted in Section 14 occurs in the context of proving the immortality of the soul. In his major works, Avicenna begins first of all

77 *Shukūk*, 274.

by proving that although the soul's coming-to-be depends on the existence of a suitably disposed body to which it becomes connected, its continued existence does not depend on its connection to the body, and that it hence survives the body's death.[78] This is followed by an argument proving that the soul is incorruptible in itself, in the first place (*aṣlan*).[79] The passage (*Ishārāt* II.7.6) is terse; but read alongside parallel passages in the *Shifāʾ* and the *Najāt*, the central argument runs as follows.[80]

A thing that is susceptible to corruption, he argues, possesses the potentiality to be corrupted (which is to say, the potentiality for another thing to come to be in its place; the potentiality for the form of water to be corrupted by turning into air is the potentiality for the form of air to come to be). The thing also possesses the actuality of being the thing it is. Its potentiality for corruption and actuality of existence cannot be due to one and the same principle, but must be explained by two distinct principles. These are form, which provides the thing's actual existence, and matter, which explains the thing's susceptibility to corruption. So, for the human soul to be corruptible, it would be either a compound thing consisting of matter and form, or a simple entity that subsists in a material substrate. Avicenna, however, had already proved that the human soul is neither a compound of form and matter, nor a simple substance impressed in matter, but a simple, immaterial self-subsisting entity.[81] From this, Avicenna infers that the human soul is incorruptible.

Al-Ghazālī paraphrases Avicenna's argument in Discussion 19 of the *Tahāfut*, 'On refuting [the philosophers'] views that it is impossible for human souls to pass away after [having come] to exist, and that they are everlasting, their passing away being inconceivable'.[82] His only response is to refer to his earlier criticism of the more general principle on which the doctrine of the soul's incorruptibility is premised: 'The source of obfuscation is their asserting that possibility is an attribute that requires a substrate in which to inhere. We have already discussed this satisfactorily, so will not repeat ourselves; for it is one and the same problem'.[83]

78 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 244–248; *Nafs*, 227–231; *Najāt*, 378–383; cf. Druart, 'The Human Soul's Individuation and its Survival after the Body's Death'; Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes*, 103 ff.; McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 126–129.

79 Avicenna, *Najāt*, 383.

80 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 261–264; *Nafs*, 231–233; *Najāt*, 383–386.

81 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 404 ff.; *Nafs*, 209 ff.; *Najāt*, 356 ff.

82 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 339–343.

83 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 343.

A similar cross-reference is made by al-Masʿūdī in his commentary on *Ishārāt* II.7.6.[84] He proceeds by explaining Avicenna's argument for the incorruptibility of entities that are separate from matter (*mufāriqāt*), including human souls. The argument, he observes, is premised on the previously discussed principle that before a thing comes to be its possibility must obtain in a substrate, which is extended to the passing away of things. He writes that, according to Avicenna,

> Just as the possibility of existence must obtain before [the thing's] existence, so too must the possibility of nonexistence obtain before [its] nonexistence. Otherwise, [the thing]'s nonexistence would be impossible. And just as the potentiality for existence requires a substrate to inhere in—such that the substrate serves as a recipient upon which that existence would supervene—so too does the potentiality for nonexistence require a substrate upon which nonexistence would supervene.[85]

Against this, al-Masʿūdī presents two objections. The first is to refer—as al-Ghazālī does—to his earlier discussion in Section 10. He writes: 'The objection to this is the same as before—namely, that the possibility of existence does not require matter to inhere in; so the same is true of the possibility of nonexistence'.[86]

The second objection is made in the manner of an *ad hominem* (*ex concessis*) argument, starting from Avicenna's view on the coming-to-be of the human soul.[87] He argues that if the possibility of the coming-to-be of the human soul obtains in the body before the soul comes to be, then it is conceivable for the possibility of the passing away of the soul to obtain in the body, and subsequently for the soul to pass away. An Avicennist would reply that the possibility that obtains in the body before the soul comes to be is not the possibility of the soul's existence, but the possibility for the soul to have a connection (*taʿalluq*) to the body, and to govern it (*tadbīr*). So what may subsequently obtain in the body is only the possibility for this connection and governance to come to an end, rather than the possibility of the soul's passing away.

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84 *Shukūk*, 285. Avicenna's argument is outlined uncritically in *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba al-gharrāʾ* (ff. 65[a–b]).

85 *Shukūk*, 285.

86 *Shukūk*, 286.

87 *Shukūk*, 286.

Responding to this Avicennan view, al-Masʿūdī seems to develop the aforementioned brief criticism put forth by al-Ghazālī, that the governance of a body is a 'remote' relation for the soul.[88] He argues as follows:

> We say: The possibility for a connection [between the body and a soul] is insufficient for [the soul]'s [coming into] existence, unless its existence is already possible in itself. For a substrate can only become prepared for a thing that is possible in itself to become connected to it, to the exclusion of what is not possible [in itself]. So [the soul]'s possibility in itself is different from the possibility of it becoming connected to a substrate. A thing's being possible or impossible in itself may be known before consideration of the condition of the substrate, [specifically,] whether or not preparedness to receive it has obtained in [the substrate], as we have already established.
>
> Therefore, you [Avicenna] will be forced to concede (*yalzamu-kum*) the view that the possibility of existence of the soul obtains before it [comes to] exist, and that it requires a substrate to inhere in, which can only be the body. However, if it is admissible that the possibility of existence of the soul in itself inhere in the body, alongside the possibility that the soul become connected to it, then why can it not be admissible that the possibility of its passing away inhere therein? Yet if the possibility of existence in itself does not require a matter to inhere in, then the possibility of passing away too would not require a matter and a subject to subsist in.[89]

So, al-Masʿūdī's argument is basically this. The possibility of existence of X in itself—that is, the *per se* possibility of X—is different from the possibility that X become connected to some other entity. The *per se* possibility of X is the more primary of the two possibilities; for unless X is already possible of existence in itself, it cannot possibly have connections to other things. So, as is the case with all other generated things, the *per se* possibility of the human soul must be present before the coming-to-be of the soul; and this possibility either (*a*) requires a substrate to inhere in—that is, it must be rooted in a dispositional possibility that obtains in a substrate—or (*b*) does not require a substrate. Al-Masʿūdī postulates the former alternative only for the sake of argument. If (*a*) it does require a substrate, then the substrate would have to be

88 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 77; see p. 126 above.

89 *Shukūk*, 286.

the individual human body to which the soul becomes connected. The body, al-Masʿūdī avers, would then possess two distinct dispositional possibilities: one for the existence of a soul (corresponding to the soul's *per se* possibility), and another for the soul to be connected to, and to govern, the body. However, if the body serves as the substrate for the former possibility, then correspondingly it could also serve as a substrate for the possibility of the passing away of the soul, an implication that Avicenna would not concede. If, on the other hand, (*b*) the *per se* possibility of the soul does not require a substrate, then likewise the possibility of its passing away too would not require a substrate. Either way, the soul would be corruptible.

By querying the anomalous status of the human soul in Avicenna's ontology of generable things, al-Masʿūdī highlights a contradiction between Avicenna's theories of dispositional possibility and the incorruptibility, and hence immortality, of the soul. Avicenna accordingly must give up one of these two doctrines.

However, al-Masʿūdī's argument goes further than this. For regardless of which conception of possibility we subscribe to, there seems to be, in his view, no way to prove that the passing away of the human soul is impossible, or, in other words, that necessarily the soul is immortal. This position accords with two earlier discussions in the *Shukūk*. In Section 13, titled 'That the human soul is not affected by the loss of the body through death', which immediately precedes the section at hand, al-Masʿūdī rejects Avicenna's argument that the soul survives the corruption of the body on the grounds that the soul is in itself immaterial and incorruptible.[90] This argument, al-Masʿūdī tells us elsewhere, is non-apodictic (*lā tufīdu l-yaqīn*), but merely persuasive (*iqnāʿī*).[91] His rejection of both arguments for the immortality of the human soul stems from his more basic conviction—stated in Section 5 of the *Shukūk*, in a passage cited earlier in the present study—that the immateriality and self-subsistence of the rational soul cannot be proved philosophically, but are only established by prophetic revelation.[92] It follows that the immortality of the soul too can only be established by revelation, and is not rationally demonstrable. This stance appears to be an influence from al-Ghazālī, who in turn adopted it from earlier theology. In classical Ashʿarī works, both the reality of the spirit (*rūḥ*, *nafs*) and the afterlife are always treated under the heading '*al-samʿiyyāt*' (matters known through revelation); so the mind can only go so far as to recognise the

90 *Shukūk*, 282–284; Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 244–248; cf. *Nafs*, 227–231; *Najāt*, 378–383.

91 *Shukūk*, 242.

92 *Shukūk*, 239–240; see p. 81 above.

conceivability of certain things and occurrences in question, but their truth can only be established through the teachings of revelation.[93]

4.5 Concluding Remarks: Dispositional Possibility and *Per Se* Possibility Post-Avicenna

To conclude the present chapter, let us return to the main point of contention in Section 10 of the *Shukūk*, and take a quick glance at the later history of this problem. As already noted, the association between *per se* possibility and essence is already well-established in Avicenna. As far as I am aware, however, al-Masʿūdī was the first (1) to point out that Avicenna's notion of the possibility of generable things, which inheres in a substrate, is not reducible to *per se* possibility, and consequently the first (2) to propose a clear-cut distinction between these two conceptions of possibility, and (3) to link possibility-in-matter explicitly to preparedness. As we have shown, the association between dispositional possibility and potentiality is already evident in Avicenna, although, to my knowledge, he nowhere explicitly makes the link. The fact that al-Masʿūdī expresses such fundamental and genuine puzzlement at what Avicenna intends attests that he was unaware of any earlier attempts to disentangle Avicenna's two accounts of modality.

To counter al-Masʿūdī's criticism, al-Rāzī incorporates the same distinction and terms proposed by his contemporary, developing what appears to be the first fully fledged Avicennan account of dispositional possibility as contrasted to *per se* possibility. He does so, as we saw earlier in the present chapter, in the extant excerpts from Section 10 of his *Jawābāt*.[94] At some later point after al-Rāzī, in the seventh/thirteenth or early eighth/fourteenth century, the terms 'dispositional possibility' (*imkān istiʿdādī*) and '*per se* possibility', or 'essential possibility' (*imkān dhātī*) are introduced, and they continue to be employed in later Arabic philosophy.[95] To give one illustrative example, in al-Tahānawī's great technical dictionary completed in 1158/1745, the *Kashshāf*, the entry on 'possibility' (*imkān*) is commenced by delineating precisely this distinction and using these very terms.[96]

Al-Masʿūdī, to my knowledge, was also the first to characterise *per se* possibility as a 'negative notion' (*amr salbī*), which is to say that it is nonexistent

93 Shihadeh, 'Classical Ashʿarī Anthropology', 265 ff.; idem., 'Al-Ghazālī and *Kalām*'.

94 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 57.

95 The terms appear well-established in al-Taḥtānī's (d. 766/1364) *Muḥākamāt* (343 ff.).

96 Al-Tahānawī, *Kashshāf*, 1, 267–269.

(*ʿadamī*), in contrast to dispositional possibility, which is an 'existent thing' (*amr wujūdī*). The former characterisation is a Ghazālian influence, of course, but it is al-Masʿūdī's formulation of this question as a distinct ontological problem that led al-Rāzī to identify it as a principal aporia in his works, namely, whether or not possibility is real (*thubūtī*).[97] This problem too continues to be debated in later Arabic philosophy, and I shall conclude by giving just one striking example. In his influential compendium of philosophical theology, the *Mawāqif*, ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1355) argues that necessity, possibility and impossibility have a purely mental (*iʿtibārī*) reality and lack any existence in the external world.[98] A little later, he discusses coming-to-be, and there cites the Avicennan view that the possibility of a thing that comes to be is existent (*wujūdī*) and requires a substrate. He remarks that 'what is intended by this possibility is dispositional possibility, rather than *per se* possibility', and he explains that he meant the latter type of possibility when he argued earlier that possibility has no extra-mental existence.[99] Here is al-Jurjānī's (d. 838/1434) commentary on this point:

> *Per se* possibility is a mental thing, which is cognised with respect to a thing when its essence is related to existence. It is concomitant to the essence, associated to it, and subsists in it, as already mentioned. It is inconceivable for [*per se* possibility] to vary at all in terms of strength and weakness, or proximity or remoteness, in contrast to dispositional possibility. For [the latter] is an existent thing in the category of quality, subsists in the substrate of the thing to which possibility is related, rather than in [the thing itself], is not concomitant to [the thing itself],[100] and is subject to gradation [in proximity or remoteness].[101]

97 For instance, al-Rāzī, *Mabāḥith*, 1, 118–121 (where the problem is discussed in two sections: on whether one-sided possibility is real, and on whether two-sided possibility is real); *Sharḥ*, 2, 404–408; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 188–193.

98 Al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 68–70.

99 Al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 77.

100 Reading *wa-ghayr*, rather than *wa-ghayru-hu*.

101 Al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 4, 10.

CHAPTER 5

Avicenna's Proof of the Existence of God: Problem 7

In Section 7 of the *Shukūk*, al-Masʿūdī targets Avicenna's well-known cosmological argument from possibility for the existence of the First Cause, God. In what follows, we begin with a reading of the proof as it appears in the *Ishārāt*, referring where relevant to the corresponding discussion in the *Najāt*, and then make a quick detour to the *Shifāʾ*, where Avicenna addresses a closely related puzzle. We then consider al-Ghazālī's objections to the proof, before turning to the complaint raised by al-Masʿūdī.

5.1 Avicenna's Proof from Possibility

The proof of the existence of the Necessary of Existence through Itself appears in Chapter 4 of the Physics and Metaphysics of the *Ishārāt* (II.4.9–15).[1] Following a discussion of causation, Avicenna introduces the concepts 'possible existent' and 'necessary existent', and submits that every existent must be either possible of existence in itself, or necessary of existence in itself (*Ishārāt* II.4.9).[2] A thing that is possible in itself is predisposed as such to neither existence nor nonexistence. So if such a thing becomes existent, there must be something other than itself that tips the balance and renders its existence preponderant to its nonexistence. Therefore, the existence of a possible thing must be caused by another (*Ishārāt* II.4.10).[3] What Avicenna intends by 'cause' here is a 'metaphysical' efficient cause (that is, a cause of existence), as opposed to a 'physical' efficient cause (that is, a cause of motion).[4] As such, the cause of a possible existent must coexist with its effect.[5]

1 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 19–27. For a discussion of the proof as it appears in the *Najāt*, see McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 163–168.

2 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 19.

3 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 20.

4 On this distinction, see Section 3.2 above.

5 This reading finds explicit confirmation in the *Najāt* (567; cf. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity*, 299ff.). In his commentary on the proof as it appears in the *Ishārāt*, al-Rāzī rightly points out that it lacks a vital ingredient—namely, an indication of whether the series of successive causes possible of existence are ordered temporally, or are simultaneous. He writes that

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Now, it is obvious that possible existents do actually exist. Each possible existent must be caused either by another possible existent, or by an existent necessary through itself. As the existence of the latter has yet to be demonstrated, the argument proceeds on the assumption that the cause is a possible existent. If this second possible existent is caused by yet another possible existent, which is caused by yet another possible existent, then the series of successive causes possible of existence may be either infinite or finite. The next passage (*Ishārāt* II.4.11), therefore, begins with the disjunctive 'either' (*immā*), although Avicenna here only considers the former disjunct, namely that the series is infinite (which is why, in what follows, I have replaced 'either' with 'if'). He writes:

> If [the series of causes possible of existence] regresses *ad infinitum*, then each unit in this series will be possible in itself. The whole (*jumla*) is dependent on these [units]. Therefore, it too is not necessary, but must be necessitated by another.[6]

The second disjunct—that the series of causes possible in themselves is finite—is omitted, as it points straightforwardly to the existence of an ultimate cause necessary through itself.[7] What is deserving of consideration is only the notion that the series of causes possible of existence could regress *ad infinitum*, which ostensibly would leave no room for an ultimate, first cause. Both disjuncts are mentioned in the *Najāt*.[8]

Avicenna 'ought to have explained, prior to this section [*Ishārāt* II.4.11], that the efficient cause cannot precede its effect in time. For if it is possible [for the cause to precede its effect in time], it would not be impossible for every possible thing to be dependent on another preceding it in time, *ad infinitum*. However, according to him, this is not impossible' (*Sharḥ*, 2, 346). The question of whether or not the series of temporally successive occurrences is beginningless is of no relevance to Avicenna's proof for the existence of the Necessary of Existence through Itself; and, in fact, the discussion centres on the concept of 'possibility' and makes no reference to 'coming-to-be'. So, as al-Rāzī adds, the precise question Avicenna needs to address is whether or not an infinite series of *simultaneous* causes exist. Al-Rāzī opines that this is the place in which Avicenna ought to have addressed this question, but excuses him since he returns to it in *Ishārāt* II.5.1–3, as we have already seen in Chapter 3 (*Sharḥ*, 2, 346–347). So I differ with Toby Mayer, who takes the series to be temporally ordered, and reads al-Rāzī's attempt to develop Avicenna's argument as a misreading motivated by a theological agenda ('Ibn Sīnā's Burhān', 28 ff.).

6 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 21.

7 Cf. al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ*, 2, 347.

8 Avicenna, *Najāt*, 567.

The point that Avicenna makes here is that a hypothetical series consisting of an infinite number of possible things constitutes a *whole*, and in this respect can be treated as a self-contained set. As such, the series must be in itself either necessary or possible. It cannot be necessary through itself; for the whole depends on its constituent parts, in the sense that it exists through their existence, and the parts in this case are all possible of existence. Therefore, the whole, like its parts, must be possible of existence. And since it has already been established that what is possible of existence must be caused by another, it follows that the whole must be caused by something other than itself.

The upshot of the argument is that even a series that consists of an infinite number of causes possible of existence and includes absolutely all such causes must, as a whole, have a cause that falls outside it. This cause cannot be possible of existence, but must be something necessary of existence in itself. What Avicenna concludes here is effectively that even if an infinite series of possible causes is postulated, it cannot be self-sufficient with respect to its existence; for if this infinite series is 'bracketed' and considered as a self-contained whole, it must depend ultimately on a cause necessary of existence, beyond which no further cause exists. Avicenna's proof for the existence of the First Cause concludes with the statement, 'Therefore, every series terminates (*tantahī*) in the Necessary of Existence through Itself' (*Ishārāt* II.4.15).[9] Which implies that Avicenna's proof for the existence of God can be read as a *reductio ad absurdum*, whereby the starting hypothesis (the series is infinite) is shown to be impossible (the series must *terminate* at some point, and hence must be finite). This conclusion is spelled out explicitly in the *Najāt*:

> Therefore, possible existents must terminate in a cause that is necessary of existence. It follows that not every possible existent has a simultaneous cause possible of existence. Therefore, it is impossible for an infinite number of causes to exist together at the same time.[10]

To highlight the novelty of his train of reasoning, Avicenna is careful to keep the existence of the First Cause independent of the finitude of causes possible of existence. A little later in the *Ishārāt* (II.4.29), he refers back to this proof (and subsequent discussions) as follows:

9 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 27.

10 Avicenna, *Najāt*, 568; cf. *Ilāhiyyāt*, VIII.1, 327–329.

> Reflect on how our proof for the existence and oneness of the First and His being free from attributes did not require reflection on anything except existence itself and how it did not require any consideration of Its creating and acting, even though these do attest to [Its existence and nature]. This mode, however, is more reliable and noble, that is, when we consider the state of existence, we find that existence inasmuch as it is existence bears witness to It, and afterwards It bears witness to all that comes after It in existence.[11]

The novelty of the argument lies in that it does not prove the existence of the First Cause starting from the finitude of the series of causes possible of existence. Instead, it first establishes that the First Cause exists, and then infers that the series of causes possible of existence must be finite.

$$P_\infty \ldots \to P_3 \to P_2 \to P_1$$
$$N \to \{P_\infty \ldots \to P_3 \to P_2 \to P_1\}$$
$$N \to \{P_n \ldots \to P_3 \to P_2 \to P_1\}$$

> An illustration of Avicenna's 'bracketing' of an infinite series of possible things. P_1 is caused by P_2.

The above-quoted passage (*Ishārāt* II.4.11) concludes with, 'Let us explain this further'.[12] So the next passage is labelled 'explanation' (*sharḥ*). What it explains is the notion that if all the constituent units of a whole are caused, the whole too must itself be caused by another—that is, by something other than its units—regardless of whether the units are finite or infinite in number. The passage goes as follows (*Ishārāt* II.4.12):

> Every whole, whose units are each caused, will itself require a cause that is other than its units. For either [*a*] [the whole] does not require a cause at all, in which case it will be necessary, rather than possible. However, how could it be so, when it can only be necessitated by its units!
>
> Or [*b*] it requires a cause, which is the entirety of the units, in which case it will be caused by itself; for the whole and the totality (*al-kull*) are one and the same thing. As to 'the totality' in the sense of 'each unit' (*kull wāḥid*), this will not necessitate the whole.

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11 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 54 (Marmura's translation in 'Avicenna's Proof', 133, with adjustments).

12 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 22.

> Or [*c*] it requires a cause, which is some of its units. However, none of its units would be more predisposed (*awlā*) than the others to be [the cause of the whole]. For each one of [its units] is caused, and its cause will be better predisposed in that way.
>
> Or [*d*] it requires a cause other than all its units. This is the remaining [division in the elimination process].[13]

From this elimination argument, Avicenna goes on to conclude that the thing that causes the whole of all causes possible of existence must be a terminus (*ṭaraf*), that is to say, an uncaused cause, as opposed to an intermediate thing (*wasaṭ*), which is both caused and a cause for another. This uncaused cause must be necessary in itself.[14]

In *Ishārāt* II.4.14, Avicenna then considers a series that does not consist exclusively of possible, and hence caused, things. If a series includes things that are all caused, except one which is an uncaused cause, this uncaused cause must be a terminus for the series, rather than an intermediate link within it, and as such it would be the ultimate cause for the rest of the series. Again, this ultimate cause cannot be possible, but must be necessary in itself.[15] In all cases, therefore, there must be a thing that is necessary of existence through itself, and the ultimate cause of possible existents.

5.2 Avicenna on Infinite Temporal Series

Avicenna was well-aware that the same reasoning through which he infers that a series of simultaneous causes must terminate in an uncaused cause can also be used to infer that a series of temporally ordered causes must terminate in a first, pre-eternal cause preceded by no further causes. As already noted, the former series would consist of what Avicenna considers to be 'metaphysical' causes, whereas the latter would consist of what he terms 'physical' causes.[16] So in the Physics of the *Shifāʾ*, he confutes several arguments adduced against the doctrine of a beginningless series of temporally ordered occurrences, a discussion pertinent to the question of when a series constitutes a whole.

In his response to the first objection, Avicenna makes clear that unlike a series of coexistent things, a series of temporally ordered items, in which

13 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 23–24.

14 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 27.

15 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 3, 26–27.

16 See Section 3.2 above.

items come to be and pass away in succession, does not constitute a whole. The objection in question is John Philoponus's well-known argument from the increase and decrease of infinite quantities, which came to be known as the argument from correspondence (*burhān al-taṭbīq*).[17] As presented by Avicenna, it runs as follows. If we postulate a beginningless series of successive motions, and if we then consider the number of motions that occurred up to the Flood, and those that occurred up to the present day, the former quantity will be smaller. If a quantity is smaller than an infinite quantity, then the former quantity must be finite; however, this contradicts the initial assumption that it is infinite. Our initial postulate, therefore, is unsustainable.[18] Avicenna responds by arguing that, when considered in the present, past motions will be non-existent, and hence will not cumulate into an actual infinite quantity. What is realised, therefore, is not the series of past occurrences as such, but rather each past occurrence individually. He adds:

> Yet the status of each one is not that of the whole (*kulliyya*) of the past. […] The fact is that all the finite number of things that have been or will be realised, and are such that the second follows upon the first's ceasing to exist, do not constitute a whole (*jumla*). For what is understood by 'whole' is the aggregation (*ijtimāʿ*). These are, however, simply not collected together in reality, even if each one of them exists individually at some moment during which the other does not exist.[19]

Successive past occurrences exist together only in the mind. Being transitory, they do not constitute an aggregate and have no real totality, and hence no quantity, in the external world. So the coming-to-be of further occurrences does not result in an infinite coexisting quantity.

In response to a further objection, Avicenna contends that since a temporal series such as the one described does not constitute a whole, the series lacks any real attributes. The objection is that 'if every motion comes to be in time, the whole (*kull*) and totality (*jumla*) of motions come to be in time'.[20] In other words, since all the individuals share the attribute of being temporally originated, the whole too must have the same attribute. This claim unmistakably

17 See, for instance, Philoponus, *Against Aristotle*, 145–146; Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity*, 86 ff., esp. 88–89.

18 Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.11, 365.

19 Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.11, 367 (McGinnis's translation, with modifications).

20 Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.11, 365.

parallels Avicenna's assertion that the totality of things possible of existence must, as a totality, be possible of existence, the difference being that 'possibility' here is swapped for 'coming-to-be'. Consistency demands, it seems, that Avicenna treat a chain of temporally ordered causes no differently than he treats a chain of simultaneous causes. In response, he counters that even where individuals, all sharing the same attribute, do make up a whole, the whole need not be characterised by that attribute. Moreover, in the case under discussion, the individuals do not even add up to an actual whole, as Avicenna argues reiterating his earlier point. It follows that a series of occurrences that come to be and pass away, one after the other, cannot bear any attributes, as a set, over and above the attributes borne by each of its constituents individually.[21]

5.3 Al-Ghazālī's Criticism

Avicenna's proof for the existence of the Necessary of Existence is targeted in the Fourth Discussion in al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*, titled 'On showing [the philosophers'] inability to prove the existence of the maker of the world'. In the course of his criticism, he reports the argument that if all possible things are considered as a whole, the whole too will be possible and will require a cause that is not possible, but necessary.[22] Al-Ghazālī complains that the expressions 'necessary' and 'possible' are vague, but he is willing to put up with them as long as the former is defined as 'uncaused', and the latter as 'caused'. By these definitions, however, although each individual in a hypothetical infinite series of causes will be possible in the sense of being produced by another, the totality of the series will not be produced by another—that is, by a cause that lies outside the series—and hence it is not possible in this sense.[23]

This response implies that, in the case hypothesised, something necessary (that is, the whole series, since it is uncaused) subsists through possible things. Al-Ghazālī concedes this implication—provided that 'necessary' and 'possible' are defined in the sense indicated—on the principle that what is true of the individuals need not, by extension, apply equally to the totality (*majmūʿ*). This general principle was most probably picked up from Avicenna's discussion of temporal series, where he makes exactly the same point, as we have just

21 Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.11, 368–369 (McGinnis's translation, with a slight modification).

22 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 138 ff.; for a discussion of al-Ghazālī's criticism, see Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity*, 366 ff.

23 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 138–139.

seen. To substantiate this principle, al-Ghazālī uses an *ad hominem* (*ex concessis*) argument (*ilzām*), which analogises the chain of simultaneous causes to chains of temporally ordered occurrences. For instance, time, according to the philosophers, is pre-eternal, yet it subsists through motions, each of which comes to be in time. Al-Ghazālī remarks: 'Therefore, that which has no beginning has been rendered subsistent by things that have beginnings; and "having a beginning" is true when said of individual units, but not true of the totality'.[24] It follows that the whole need not carry the same attributes as its individual parts. Al-Ghazālī concludes that since the philosophers consider the series of past occurrences beginningless, although each occurrence comes to be in time, they are not entitled to hold that a series of simultaneous causes must be finite, and correspondingly that a First Cause exists. In his view, the difference (*farq*) that his adversaries make between the two cases is purely arbitrary (*taḥakkum maḥḍ*).[25]

Al-Ghazālī then considers Avicenna's aforementioned response to the argument from correspondence, that past occurrences exist, not simultaneously, but in temporal succession, and hence do not exist as an actual infinite in the external world, though such an infinite quantity can be hypothesised in the estimation (*wahm*). He counters by pointing out that Avicenna does in fact affirm an actual infinity, namely the infinite number of souls of deceased humans, which are indestructible and hence cumulate in actual existence despite the corruption of the bodies to which they were attached.[26] A little earlier in the same Fourth Discussion in the *Tahāfut*, al-Ghazālī had already rebuffed Avicenna's contention that an actual infinity is only impossible if its constituent items are ordered in either position or nature, whereas human souls do not exist in any specific order in relation to each other, and therefore can be infinite in number. This, al-Ghazālī complains, is an unsubstantiated claim, as Avicenna fails to demonstrate that an actual infinite is impossible only if it consists of a chain ordered in either of these ways. Moreover, it is arguable that human souls are ordered according to the time of their coming-to-be, and that consequently there is no difference between an infinite number of coexisting causes and an infinite number of coexisting souls.[27]

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24 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 139.

25 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 140.

26 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 141.

27 Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 137; cf. Marmura, 'Avicenna and the Problem of the Infinite Number of Souls'.

5.4 Al-Masʿūdī's Commentary

A version of Avicenna's proof appears in al-Masʿūdī's commentary on Avicenna's *al-Khuṭba al-gharrāʾ*. If we consider the totality (*jumla*) of existents, the argument goes, then either they include an existent that is necessary through itself, or they do not include such an existent. If the former, then there exists a thing that is necessary through itself, which is what we are after.

> However, if the totality of existents does not include such an existent, but is such that the existence of any given existent is produced by another, and the existence of that other is produced by another, and the existence of that other is produced by yet another, and so on and so forth *ad infinitum*, then each individual within the totality of existents will be caused in itself, and its existence will be produced by a cause that precedes its existence. So the whole and totality of existents, qua a single whole, must be caused. For it obtains from caused individuals, and the whole that obtains from caused individuals is, by necessity, itself caused and not necessary of existence through itself. Then the cause of a caused whole must be either [1] the totality of its [constituent] individuals, or [2] each one of these individuals, or [3] a specific one of these individuals, or [4] something other than these individuals and their totality.[28]

Each division is then eliminated in turn. The cause cannot be the totality, for otherwise the totality of caused individuals would be necessary of existence through itself. Nor can it be each one of its individual constituents, for if the whole is caused by one individual it cannot conceivably be caused by another. Nor can the cause be one constituent, for since all constituents are caused, it would be a cause for its own existence and the existence of its own cause. Nor can the cause be outside the totality, for the totality was postulated to include the entirety of existents. Therefore, the postulate that all existents are caused must be false; and the contrary must be the case, namely that there must be something in existence that is uncaused and is the ultimate cause of other existents.

Notwithstanding, in Section 7 of the *Shukūk*, al-Masʿūdī raises an objection to the argument. Quoting *Ishārāt* II.4.12, the elimination argument quoted earlier in the present chapter, he opens his commentary by briefly explaining that the passage intends to prove that the series of causes must be finite, and

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28 Al-Masʿūdī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, ff. 35^{b}–36^{a}.

ultimately that a thing that is necessary through itself exists. There is nothing in the passage itself with which he disagrees: he accepts the principle that a whole, each of whose constituent units is caused, must itself be caused, and that its cause must be external to it; so he should have no quarrel with the elimination argument through which this principle is established. What he challenges, rather, is that this principle could apply to an infinite quantity of units (as claimed in *Ishārāt* II.4.11, quoted above), as follows:

A. A whole, each of whose constituent units is possible, must itself be possible.
B. An infinite series of possible things is a whole, each of whose constituent units is possible.
C. Therefore, an infinite series of possible things is itself possible.

Al-Masʿūdī targets the minor premise B, which, he contends, remains unproven, since Avicenna fails to support it with any substantiating proof.[29] He has no objections to the major premise A, the focus of al-Ghazālī's attack, as we have already seen.

An adversary (*khaṣm*) of Avicenna, al-Masʿūdī argues, can dismiss premise B as false simply on the grounds that an infinite quantity of things do not make up a whole. Being 'a whole' (*jumla*, *kull*, *jamīʿ*) is an accident concomitant to things of finite quantity. For the definition of 'the whole' of all Xs is the totality (*majmūʿ*) of all individual Xs, which does not leave out any Xs.[30] There must be an extremity, or a limit (*ḥadd*) at which Xs end, so that the totality of what falls within these limits (*maḥdūd*) constitutes a whole.[31] However, if an infinite series of coexisting causes is hypothesised, they can have no bounded, all-encompassing totality; for whatever totality we may postulate, there will be further causes beyond it in the series. So if an infinite quantity of successive things, each caused by the thing preceding it and the cause of the thing succeeding it (except for one thing, which is caused but not a cause), do not make up a whole, there will be no whole to which the causedness of each unit in the series can be extended, and which hence can be said to be caused.

The upshot of the objection is that Avicenna implicitly premises his argument on precisely the view that the argument seeks to prove. By treating the series as a 'whole', he has already determined it to be finite. So it is no surprise

29 *Shukūk*, 248.
30 *Shukūk*, 248. I have not found this definition in Avicenna.
31 *Shukūk*, 249.

that his *reductio* argument seems to show that even if a series of coexisting things is hypothesised as infinite, it necessarily is finite.

Al-Masʿūdī supports this central objection with an *ad hominem* (*ex concessis*) argument, which appeals to the same cases of infinity affirmed by Avicenna that al-Ghazālī uses in his refutation. He appeals to them, however, within a new line of argument. For al-Ghazālī, these cases illustrate that Avicenna is inconsistent in his application of the principle that what applies to all individuals applies equally to the whole, and in doing so they bring premise A into question. Al-Masʿūdī invokes them against premise B, his argument being that in other cases Avicenna does not treat infinite quantities as wholes.[32] His *ad hominem* argument takes the form of an analogy starting from cases in which all Xs share a certain attribute, but the attribute is not extended to the totality of Xs. According to al-Masʿūdī, the reason that the attribute cannot be extended from the parts to the totality is that in the starting cases, Xs are infinite in number, so they cannot constitute an all-encompassing whole. By the same token, since in the case under discussion, the series of causes postulated too is infinite, there is no totality encompassing the entirety of causes, which could carry the attribute that each individual cause has.

The first case is the rotation of the heavenly spheres. Al-Masʿūdī writes that, 'according to you' (*ʿinda-kum*), the series of heavenly rotations has no beginning and so is infinite *a parte ante*. Yet each individual rotation comes to be in time. However, as al-Masʿūdī argues, Avicenna need not concede (*lā yalzamu-kum*) that this fact must be extended to the whole series of heavenly rotations, to infer that the series comes to be in time. The second case is that, according to Avicenna, human souls are infinite in number, as we have seen. And they have been infinite in number from pre-eternity, since there was never a particular point in time before which human souls were finite in number and at which they became infinite. Yet each individual human soul came to be in time. Avicenna, however, need not concede that this fact must be extended to the entirety of human souls, to infer that the whole, just like its individual units, came to be in time. According to al-Masʿūdī, Avicenna need not concede these two implications: Avicenna is right not to appeal in either case to the notion that if all individual items of a set share an attribute, the same attribute may by extension be carried by the set as a whole, because in both cases the quantities in question are infinite and hence do not constitute wholes. Otherwise, if the rotations of a heavenly sphere do make up a whole, and if human souls likewise make up a whole, Avicenna will be forced to concede (*lazima-kum bi-l-ḍarūra*)

32 *Shukūk*, 249–250.

that both of these wholes have a beginning in time, just as their constituent units. Al-Masʿūdī concludes the section thus:

> The truth of the matter is (*al-taḥqīq fī-hi*) is what we have already stated, namely, that this [i.e. finitude] is entailed, neither with respect to [coexistent] causes, nor with respect to the separate souls, nor with respect to the rotations of the spheres. For their quantities do not terminate in a limit beyond which nothing of the same type exists, so much so that what is delimited [by it] would constitute a totality and a whole, and what applies to each individual would then apply to this totality.[33]

It goes without saying that al-Masʿūdī himself subscribes to neither of these two Avicennan doctrines (that there has been an infinite number of successive heavenly rotations in the past, and that an infinite number of human souls exist), but invokes them as sound applications of the principle that motivates his discussion. As we have already seen, in Section 9 of the *Shukūk*, he argues against the theory of the pre-eternity of the world, which excludes the former of these two doctrines.[34]

An analogy such as the one put forth by al-Masʿūdī requires proper correspondence between the two cases that form its starting point, on the one hand, and the case under discussion, on the other. Al-Masʿūdī does not establish this correspondence in detail, but deems the two sides of the analogy equivalent with respect both to (*a*) the grounds on which the attribute of individual units extends to the whole, and (*b*) the absence of a whole, when the units are infinite in number, to which any attribute could extend. He writes:

> If it is possible for each one of an infinite number of souls to be preceded by a time at which it was nonexistent, whereas the entirety of these souls (in the sense of [their overall whole][35]) is not preceded by a time at which it was nonexistent, then why would it not be possible for each one of an infinite number of causes to be preceded by a further cause from which it obtains existence, whereas the entirety of these causes (in the sense of [their overall whole]) is not preceded by a further cause from which it obtains existence? What difference is there between the two cases?[36]

33 *Shukūk*, 250.

34 See Section 3.5 above.

35 As opposed to their entirety, in the sense of 'each one, individually'.

36 *Shukūk*, 250.

In al-Masʿūdī's view, therefore, the equivalence of the two sides of the analogy seems evident and in need of no further elaboration. He challenges his Avicennist adversaries to point out a difference (*farq*) between them, which would render his analogy unsound. Pointing out a pertinent 'difference' between the original case and the secondary case is, of course, the most common way of countering an analogical argument (and we have already seen how al-Ghazālī demands the same: a *difference* between the original and secondary cases in his analogy).

Al-Masʿūdī's objection seems to seize upon a point that Avicenna himself makes. We have seen how, to counter attacks on the notion of a beginningless series of successive things that come to be and pass away, Avicenna argues that such a series is not impossible because its units do not constitute a whole (*jumla*), since the units are not coexistent.[37] What al-Masʿūdī does is to argue that the series is not impossible because it does not constitute a whole, since it is infinite.

The extant parts of al-Rāzī's *Jawābāt* do not include his commentary on Section 7 of the *Shukūk*.[38] But we would expect an Avicennist to respond to al-Masʿūdī's analogy, not by taking up the challenge to delineate the difference between the original and secondary cases, but by rejecting the grounds on which he maintains that in the two original cases within his analogy the finitude of the series does not immediately follow from the finitude of its units. So while, to my mind, al-Masʿūdī's central objection—that an infinite series cannot be treated as a self-contained whole, at least not in Avicenna's matter-of-fact manner—seems quite compelling, there is much less mileage in his analogical *ad hominem* argument, as it fails to fulfil the principal requirement of this type of argument, namely, that it should start from the adversary's own views.

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37 See Section 5.2 above.

38 The only work in which, to my knowledge, al-Rāzī discusses, and responds to, al-Masʿūdī's objection is the *Maṭālib* (1, 145; 149).

CHAPTER 6

Matter and Form: Problem 1

The opening section of the *Shukūk* tackles a problem that occurs towards the beginning of Chapter 1 of the Physics and Metaphysics of the *Ishārāt*. Al-Masʿūdī attacks Avicenna's theory of matter and body, particularly his proof of prime matter and closely related theory of corporeal form. In what follows, I shall begin by contextualising the problem against the backdrop of Avicenna's hylomorphism and Abū l-Barakāt's criticisms and advocacy of an alternative strand of hylomorphism. We shall then turn to the *Ishārāt* and *Shukūk*.[1]

6.1 Avicenna's Theory of Matter and Corporeity

According to Avicenna, 'body' (*jism*) is said of different things. In the sense of 'natural body' (*jism ṭabīʿī*), it denotes the substance in which three dimensions (*buʿd*), perpendicular to one another can be postulated.[2] He is, nonetheless, aware that were the dimensions hypothesised to become actual, they would be accidental, rather than essential, features of body; for this reason, he considers this definition a description (*rasm*) of body, as opposed to a real definition (*ḥadd*), which would only consist of essential features of what is defined.[3] In one place, Avicenna gives the real definition of body as 'the form of continuity (*ittiṣāl*), which receives the positing of the three dimensions we have mentioned'.[4] 'Continuity' here is used in the sense of divisibility, which is the absolute sense of the term: a thing is continuous in itself if we can postulate divisions within it, such that any two postulated divisions share a common boundary.[5]

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1 See also: Shihadeh, 'Avicenna's Corporeal Form and Proof of Prime Matter'. In the present chapter, Sections 6.1 and 6.2 and part of Section 6.3 draw closely on this article.

2 Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.I.2, 13; *Ilāhiyyāt*, II.2, 61–63; *Ḥudūd*, 22.

3 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, II.2, 63.

4 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, II.2, 64; cf. Stone, 'Simplicius and Avicenna', 101–102.

5 In addition to this absolute sense, Avicenna gives two further, relative definitions for 'continuity', namely: contiguity, that is, when two bodies share a common boundary, in the sense that their surfaces are in contact; and attachment, that is, when two bodies are attached to one another, either by adhesion or interconnection (Avicenna, *Manṭiq*, II.III.4, 116–117; *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.III.2, 269–271; cf. Stone, 'Simplicius and Avicenna', 102).

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Another sense of 'body' is 'mathematical body' (*jism taʿlīmī*), which is a non-substantial, but accidental, form that inheres in a corporeal substance.[6] 'Mathematical body' denotes the accidents of magnitude that are concomitant (*lāzim*, *lāḥiq*) to natural body in its actual existence in determinate bodies, but do not contribute to the subsistence (*qiwām*) and realisation (*taḥaqquq*) of corporeity, being accidental rather than essential to it.[7] For example, finitude is necessarily concomitant to all determinate bodies, because all individual bodies consist of finite parcels of matter.[8] Associated with finitude are further quantitative accidents, specifically surfaces, determinate dimensions and shapes.[9] As the quantitative form of any given body is accidental, it is never inherently necessary; yet certain bodies, most notably the celestial spheres, possess fixed magnitudes by virtue of their natures, which are distinct from the corporeity they share with all bodies, and from their specific magnitudes.[10]

Body, in the sense of natural body, is a composite of two primary principles, namely prime matter and corporeal form (*ṣūra jismiyya*). These are the two proximate causes to which body owes its subsistence.[11] The most basic difference between these two principles is that the material cause of body is a passive principle and associated with pure potentiality, whereas the formal cause is an active principle and associated with actuality:

> If [the cause of a thing] is included in its constitution and is part of its existence, then either it must be the part where, in terms of its existence alone,[12] it is not necessary for it to be actual, but only to be in potency, and is termed 'matter'. Or [the cause must be] the part whose existence is its being in actuality, namely form.[13]

Considering its absolute passivity, matter, according to Avicenna, lacks existence of itself and exists only by virtue of being actualised by the form, to which

6 Avicenna, *Manṭiq*, II.III.4, 115; *Ilāhiyyāt*, II.2, 64–65.

7 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, II.2, 62.

8 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, II.2, 62; *Manṭiq*, II.III.4, 113; *Ishārāt*, 2, 191–195; 2, 227.

9 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, II.2, 62; *Ishārāt*, 2, 191; 2, 243–244; 2, 227.

10 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, II.2, 64; *Najāt*, 499; *Ishārāt*, 2, 174–176.

11 Avicenna, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.I.1, 14; *Ilāhiyyāt*, II.2, 64–65; 257 ff.; *Najāt*, 190–191.

12 Reading *waḥdahu*, rather than *wa-ḥaddihi* (Marmura).

13 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, VI.1, 258 (Marmura, 195, with modifications); cf. 257; cf. Belo, *Chance and Determinism*, 57 ff.

it is a mere passive recipient (*qābil*).[14] It can never be divested of form.[15] So matter is a principle only accidentally, 'because it is first rendered subsistent in act through form, while its essence, considered only in itself, is in potency'.[16] In the same vein, since matter of itself lacks any actuality, it is not inherently corporeal by predisposition, and hence does not contribute to the actualisation of body *qua* body.

So body is not corporeal on account of being material. What invests body with corporeity (*jismiyya*)—that is, three-dimensional continuity—is corporeal form, which is a substantial form combined with prime matter to constitute natural body. Corporeal form is the active principle of body and associated with the actualisation and realisation of body *qua* body.[17] Corporeal form is common to all determinate bodies, no individual body having more or less of it than another.[18]

6.2 Avicenna's Proof of Prime Matter in the *Ishārāt*

Avicenna proves that body consists of the combination of matter and corporeal form using an argument that starts from body's continuity and susceptibility to discontinuity. We shall only consider here the proof as it appears in Chapter 1 of the Physics and Metaphysics of the *Ishārāt*, titled 'On the reality of bodies' (*fī tajawhur al-ajsām*).[19] The proof is preceded by five passages, which make the following points (*Ishārāt* II.1.1–5):

1. Avicenna, first of all, refutes the belief held by 'some people' that bodies consist of indivisible parts (*juzʾ*), a clear reference to the standard classical *kalām* atomism taught in Baṣran Muʿtazilism and Ashʿarism.[20]

14 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, VI.1, 258; II.3, 72 ff.
15 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, II.3, 72 ff.; *Najāt*, 502–506; *Ishārāt*, 2, 202 ff.
16 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, VI.1, 258 (Marmura, 195).
17 Avicenna, *Manṭiq*, II.III.4, 113.
18 Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, II.2, 64; 71; *Manṭiq*, II.III.4, 113–114; *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, I.I.1, 13; *Ishārāt*, 2, 174; 2, 243–244.
19 On rendering '*tajawhur*' as 'reality' (*ḥaqīqa*), as opposed to 'substantiality', see al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ*, 2, 3–4. On the versions that appear in the *Shifāʾ* and the *Najāt*, and on how the *Ishārāt* argument relates to them, see: Shihadeh, 'Avicenna's Corporeal Form and Proof of Prime Matter'.
20 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 152–157. On this strand of atomism, see Dhanani, *Physical Theory*.

2. He then refutes the belief held by 'other people' that bodies consist of infinitely divisible parts, which is the theory attributed to the early Muʿtazilī al-Naẓẓām (d. 220–230/835–845).[21]
3. From his refutation of atomism in 1 and 2, he infers that bodies consist of a continuum, and are susceptible to division either actually or in thought.[22]
4. From 3, it follows that bodies are infinitely divisible, at least in thought.[23]
5. He points out that later in the book, he will prove that motion and time too are continua.[24]

From 3 and 4—that is to say, the continuity and infinite divisibility of body—Avicenna goes on to infer that body consists of matter and corporeal form. Labelled a 'pointer' (*ishāra*, by which he means 'proof'), the passage goes as follows (*Ishārāt* II.1.6):

> You have come to know that a body has a continuous, three-dimensional magnitude, and that it is susceptible to discontinuity and fragmentation. You also know that what is continuous in itself is different from the recipient of continuity and discontinuity, whose receptivity is itself attributed by both [i.e. as receptivity to continuity and discontinuity]. Therefore, the potentiality for this reception is different from the existence in actuality of that which is received, and different from its shape and form. This potentiality belongs to [something] other than what is the same as what is continuous in itself, which at the occurrence of discontinuity passes away, and a different [thing] comes to be, and the like of which then comes to be anew at the restoration of continuity.[25]

Although the conclusion is not stated here, Avicenna appears to refer back to this passage a little later in the chapter (*Ishārāt* II.1.10) as his proof that body consists of the combination of prime matter and corporeal form.[26] This cross-reference is noted by al-Masʿūdī.[27]

The passage begins with, 'You have come to know', since the starting points of the argument are not self-evident, but have just been demonstrated earlier

21 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 158–162.
22 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 163–165.
23 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 166.
24 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 167.
25 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 172–173.
26 Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2, 182–183.
27 *Shukūk*, 197.

in the chapter: body is continuous, and at the same time divisible. These are two characteristics of body. On the one hand, body is essentially continuous; so it has actual continuity. On the other hand, body is susceptible to both continuity and discontinuity; so it has the potentiality to receive either. Now, these two characteristics of body either belong to one and the same simple substance, or they belong to two different things the combination of which constitutes body. However, the thing that is susceptible to both continuity and discontinuity cannot be the same as continuity itself, because (determinate) continuity passes away at the occurrence of discontinuity, and is replaced with different determinate continuities. Similarly, when two bodies combine into one, their determinate continuities will pass away and be replaced with a new determinate continuity. Therefore, these two characteristics belong to two different things within body: corporeal form, which invests body with actual continuity and is subject to generation and corruption; and matter, to which the potentiality for continuity and discontinuity belongs, and which serves as the substrate for the generation and corruption of continuity.

6.3 Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī's Competing Theory of Matter

In his philosophical summa, the *Muʿtabar*, Abū l-Barakāt attacks Avicenna's theory that corporeity is a substantial form superadded to prime matter. He opines that Avicenna—whom, in this context, he does not identify by name, but refers to simply as 'an eminent individual' (*baʿḍ al-fuḍalāʾ*)[28]—was misled into developing this theory by a misreading of statements concerning the nature of matter in ancient sources, particularly Aristotle, whom Abū l-Barakāt quotes directly.[29] When Aristotle asserts that prime matter lacks any inherent quantitative characteristics, he means that matter is deprived of determinate, accidental magnitude, as Abū l-Barakāt explains:

> They [i.e. Avicenna] became confused by the assertions of the ancients, who coined this expression [i.e. 'matter' (*hayūlā*)], when they said that it has neither magnitude, shape, attribute of heaviness or lightness, nor location such as up or down. What [the ancients] meant by this is that, of itself, it is not characterised by any specific magnitude that is bigger or smaller than another, double or half, or any specific attribute such

28 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 3, 201.

29 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 3, 200–201.

> as lightness or heaviness. [Matter] has none of these [characteristics] by virtue of its essence, or as parts of its essence.[30]

So while Aristotle denies that matter has any inherent determinate characteristics, he can plausibly be read as affirming that matter is essentially corporeal.[31] Yet Avicenna misinterprets his statements as divesting matter of corporeity altogether, such that if considered separately from form, it would be characterised by neither three-dimensional continuity nor divisibility, and be apprehensible to the mind but imperceptible to the senses.[32]

Against the Avicennan thesis that prime matter does not exist of itself but is only actualised by form,[33] Abū l-Barakāt argues that prime matter is in fact body, and accordingly essentially corporeal and characterised by continuous extension (*imtidād ittiṣālī*). By analysing (*taḥlīl*) bodies to their basic constituents, both in reality (*wujūdī*) and in the mind (*dhihnī, fī l-naẓar*), we find that there must be an underlying substrate that all bodily objects share and that persists unchanged as they undergo qualitative alteration. This substrate must be essentially corporeal, as all observed and conceivable alterations that supervene upon bodies affect them qualitatively, but never cause their corporeity to pass away or come to be.[34] He writes:

> Reflection reveals to us things that we call 'matter' for other things, such as wood for a bed. Wood too has as its matter things that share its substrate with it, but differ from it with respect to form. For when wood is burnt, ash remains and water and air separate. So earth (which is the ash), water and air are the matter of wood, from which it is composed, and to which it decomposes. Therefore, each of water, earth and air is a matter for things that are composed of them, which vary in that they have a higher proportion of some and a lower proportion of others. Finally, these [elements] share corporeity (*jismiyya*) among them. Body (*jism*), hence, is the prime matter for all; yet body itself does not have underlying matter, because we find that it neither is composed of another thing nor becomes decomposed to another thing.[35]

30 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 2, 12; cf. 3, 200–201.
31 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 3, 200.
32 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 2, 12.
33 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 2, 16; 2, 123–124.
34 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 2, 10–12; 3, 195–196; 3, 202–203.
35 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 3, 195–196.

Abū l-Barakāt cites the traditional Aristotelian argument from the transmutation of the elements to the presence of an underlying material substrate common to all bodily objects, and remarks that it accords perfectly with his own proof and doctrine of prime matter. Referring to the Aristotelian argument, he writes:

> This is none other than the notion [of matter] that we have set out. For when water becomes altered into air, it will lose all the characteristics that characterise water, except corporeity, and it will acquire all the characteristics that characterise air, except corporeity. So what is common and unchanging is [corporeity], and nothing else.[36]

As to Avicenna's theory that prime matter is incorporeal and that body hence consists of the combination of matter and corporeal form, it has no basis in any evidence: 'We have not discerned this so-called 'matter' in body through perception, nor does it result from decomposition, nor are we led to accepting it by [...] a demonstrative argument'.[37]

Abū l-Barakāt also confutes Avicenna's argument for the existence of such matter. The thrust of his lengthy response is that the inference starts from change that body undergoes in the accident of magnitude, rather than in corporeity.[38] He targets the assertion that continuity passes away at the occurrence of discontinuity, for which he considers two possible interpretations.[39] The first is that the body's continuity passes away completely. Avicenna's argument would be sound if the premise, thus understood, were true. It is, however, false; for division does not cause the continuity of the entire body to pass away, and indeed even if the body is divided infinitely, the outcome of each division will be continuous parts. The second interpretation is that only the continuity between the potential parts of the body divided is lost. If correct, however, this interpretation would render the argument unsound; for the continuity that is lost with division will be a relation, and therefore accidental, rather than substantive. The potential parts, which become actually separate parts, remain unchanged with respect to their corporeity, and undergo neither generation nor corruption by division. As Abū l-Barakāt writes,

36 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 3, 201.
37 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 3, 200.
38 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 3, 196–202.
39 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 3, 201–202.

> If [a body] is divided, discontinuity will not make its continuity cease to be in the way that the form of air makes the form of water cease to be, so that [the existence of] a thing common to both of them can be established. Rather, it multiplies it. Yet multiplication is not the same as passing away.[40]

Both Avicenna's argument and Abū l-Barakāt's objection became widely influential in the twelfth century. Al-Rāzī reports that the debate had become highly partisan among his contemporaries (*ʿaẓuma taʿaṣṣub al-nās*).[41] Avicenna's argument from body's susceptibility to discontinuity was the standard philosophical proof (*al-burhān al-mashhūr*) of prime matter.[42] It is the proof, he writes, on which hylomorphists 'rely and with which they stride around (*bi-hā yaṣūlūna*)!'[43] The same proof, unsurprisingly, is deployed in Bahmanyār's *Taḥṣīl* and al-Lawkarī's *Bayān al-ḥaqq*, and reported in al-Ghazālī's *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* and al-Shahrastānī's *Milal*.[44] Abū l-Barakāt's counterargument, on the other hand, is reproduced by critics of Avicenna, such as al-Shahrastānī.[45] Ibn Ghaylān al-Balkhī, al-Masʿūdī's colleague, provides the following summary:

> Abū l-Barakāt refuted this [argument of Avicenna] in the *Muʿtabar*, where he writes: The discontinuity that supervenes on the body does not make its continuity pass away—that is, continuity in the sense of the reality and essence [of body]—it rather multiplies it.[46] For each of its two parts [which result from division] is essentially a continuous body, no less so than the [original] whole. In fact, what passes away is the continuity that is an accident inhering in it, on account of which it is initially long and then with the passing away of [this continuity] becomes short, or it is initially wide and with this becomes narrow, or it is thick and with this becomes thin. The[47] extended continuity that is the reality of [body]

40 Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 3, 202.

41 Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 3, 21.

42 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 12.

43 Al-Rāzī, *Maṭālib*, 6, 201.

44 Bahmanyār, *Taḥṣīl*, 312–318; al-Lawkarī, *Bayān*, 50–54; al-Ghazālī, *Maqāṣid*, 2, 90–91; al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 366; cf. idem., *Nihāyat al-aqdām*, 164.

45 Al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat al-aqdām*, 165. This, he remarks in characteristic fashion, is a philosopher's response to another philosopher (as opposed to a *mutakallim*'s response).

46 Reading *yukaththiru-hu* rather than *bi-kathra*.

47 Reading *wa-l-ittiṣāl* rather than *aw al-ittiṣāl*.

> remains unchanged. This is similar to Avicenna's assertion that if a lump of wax is shaped once in the shape of a ball, then in the shape of a cylinder, and so forth, the continuity that is its corporeal form will persist, while its accidents—namely, length, width and thickness—will change. Therefore, discontinuity and continuity will only supervene in succession upon the continuity that is corporeity; so it does not follow that there must be a matter that receives the form of corporeity.[48]

As al-Rāzī observes in his *Jawābāt*, Abū l-Barakāt also inspires Section 1 of al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk*, to which we should now turn.[49]

6.4 Al-Masʿūdī's Commentary

Al-Masʿūdī opens Section 1 of the *Shukūk* by quoting Avicenna's proof of prime matter (*Ishārāt* II.1.6), and then briefly indicating its unstated conclusion: 'His objective (*gharaḍ*) in this passage is to demonstrate that body consists of a complex of matter and form; he points this out a little later where he states …'. Al-Masʿūdī then refers to *Ishārāt* II.1.10, where this conclusion is stated.[50] No further interpretation of Avicenna's text is provided. The ensuing critical commentary consists of three parts:

1. Al-Masʿūdī argues that Avicenna's proof falls short of entailing its purported conclusion.
2. He moots a hypothetical view of the nature of body to confirm his criticism of the proof.
3. He advances an alternative proof of prime matter, which assumes a different strand of hylomorphism.

Avicenna's argument, al-Masʿūdī submits, is not fit for purpose; for rather than proving that body consists of matter and form, it only goes so far as to illustrate a more general point:

> This argument falls short of its intended objective (*lā yafī bi-hādhā l-gharaḍ*). For what is entailed by it is that we have continuity and a recipi-

48 Ibn Ghaylān, *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, 123.

49 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 19.

50 *Shukūk*, 197. See p. 159 above.

> ent thereof, and that the two are different. This, however, is an indubitable fact.

The problem, of course, is that by proving the presence of continuity and a receptacle thereof, Avicenna, according to his critic, still has to show that the continuity in question is a substantial form and not merely an accident.

Al-Masʿūdī goes on to make a case for the possibility that Avicenna fails to address, namely that the continuity-and-recipient dichotomy evinced in the argument is merely the dichotomy of accidental magnitude and body. He writes:

> One may argue (*li-qāʾil an yaqūla*) that the continuity that passes away at the occurrence of discontinuity, and that the like of which then comes to be when discontinuity comes to an end [i.e. when continuity is restored], is an accident in the category of continuous quantity (*ʿaraḍ min bāb al-kammiyya al-muttaṣila*), and that the subject (*mawḍūʿ*) that receives it is none other than body.
>
> A single lump of wax, for instance, has magnitude, three-dimensionality and continuity. It may then become subject to discontinuity and fragmentation, if it is divided into portions, split into parts, and made multiple separate pieces. What passes away, and is lost, as a result of this division and fragmentation is only the unity (*waḥda*) that was in [the original lump of wax], the magnitude that it had, and the continuity that existed in act within it between its postulated parts. It is manifestly evident that all of these are accidents that supervene upon body and pass away, while the reality (*ḥaqīqa*) of body is altered neither by its supervention nor passing away. For every part that becomes separate from the lump of wax is no less a lump of wax than the one from which it was separated, and the two differ in nothing but some accident or other, such as magnitude or the like.
>
> Every body has a magnitude and [accidental] continuity. This magnitude and continuity may pass away, and the like of which may then come to be anew, but the corporeity that the body will have after [either of these changes] will remain the same as it was beforehand. For the form by which [corporeity] subsists remains the same in both cases [i.e. in both types of change].[51]

51 *Shukūk*, 197–198.

So, when a body is divided, there will be no loss of continuity, in the sense of formal corporeity, since the resultant parts will be no less corporeal than the original body. The passing away and coming-to-be of quantitative continuity only attest the inherence of accidents of magnitude in body, but not the subsistence of corporeity, as a substantial form, in matter.

Al-Masʿūdī's objection starts with the contention that Avicenna's argument falls short of its purported goal, since it only evinces a dichotomy of continuity and recipient in body, which is an equivocal conclusion, as the dichotomy evidenced can be that of (A) substantial form and matter, or (B) accidental form and body. He proposes an alternative reading of the division hypothesised in body, yielding B. So al-Masʿūdī concludes this particular objection by asserting that Avicenna needs a further argument to establish A. Al-Masʿūdī himself affirms B not merely for the sake of argument, but as a genuine commitment.

The second part of al-Masʿūdī's criticism is a follow-up challenge, which echoes the characteristic style of al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*. He begins with the formulaic rhetorical question, 'How do you counter one who asserts …' (*bi-ma tunkirūna ʿalā man yaqūlu bi-*), which occurs numerous times in the *Tahāfut*, where it generally introduces views that are contrary to the philosophers' doctrines, and that they do not, or arguably cannot, disprove. The views submitted may be actual commitments of the questioner, or may be postulated purely for the sake of argument, in order to undermine the respondent's position.[52] The challenge mooted by al-Masʿūdī is of the latter type.

He postulates that body is a simple, non-composite and self-subsisting substance, and that the reality of any given body is its species form (*ṣūra nawʿiyya*). For instance, the reality of a lump of wax is simply the form of wax (*ṣūrat al-shamʿiyya*), which is not combined with anything. Any particular lump of wax, however, will invariably be characterised by accidents of magnitude; and if any of these accidents undergo change—for instance, if the body is divided or reshaped—the reality and essence of the lump of wax will not be affected. The fact that such a hypothetical state of affairs involves no absurdities, but seems entirely plausible, confirms, in al-Masʿūdī's view, that Avicenna's argument from discontinuity fails to entail that body is not a simple substance, but a complex of matter and form. He concludes:

> Therefore, a demonstration is still needed (*lā budda min al-burhān*) to prove that this form is not self-subsistent, but rather subsists in a recipient, which is its matter and substrate. What you [Avicenna] have ad-

52 For instance, al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 26; 31; 34; 39.

> duced—namely, that there is something that receives continuity, and is other than the continuity received—does not entail this conclusion. For the recipient that you have evinced is the reality of body, and the continuity it receives is an accident, the subject of which is body.[53]

To recap, Avicenna fails to prove that body consists of matter and form; and a proof 'is still needed'. In the remainder of the section, al-Masʿūdī himself will provide this proof. What is at stake, however, is not only the proof, but Avicenna's theory of matter and corporeal form.

The alternative proof is provided in the third and final part of the section. Al-Rāzī observes that here again al-Masʿūdī is reliant on Abū l-Barakāt: 'After the esteemed objector [al-Masʿūdī] finished setting out the objection given by al-Shaykh Abū l-Barakāt to establish that [Avicenna's] proof for the existence of matter is specious, he endorsed his theory of matter'.[54] Al-Masʿūdī introduces his alternative proof of prime matter with the phrase, 'As to what we have arrived at through investigation (*ammā lladhī intahā ilay-hi l-baḥth*) to prove matter …', signalling the end of the dialectical discussion in the section.[55] Some bodies, he argues, undergo alteration with respect to species, such that one essence passes away and a different essence comes to be. Such a qualitative alteration, however, does not change the body in its entirety. For something will remain unchanged before and after the alteration, neither passing away nor coming to be. For example, an egg, when it hatches, becomes altered into a bird, and sperm is altered into an animal. Wheat, when prepared for consumption and then ingested and digested, is altered, respectively, into flour, dough, bread, chyle, blood and finally flesh and bones. In each of these cases, something in the body is altered, but the body does not pass away completely. So there must be something in the body that remains constant, and receives the different alternating species that come to be and pass away. Al-Masʿūdī concludes:

> The thing that receives these things and serves as their substrate is what we call 'hyle' and 'matter'. It is not a thing we can perceive with any of our senses, but it is knowable by the testimony of reason. As to these alternating things, we call them 'forms' and 'accidents'. You have already come to know the difference between form and accident: with [the alteration of] some of these things the species is altered, and with [the alteration of oth-

53 *Shukūk*, 198–199.

54 Al-Rāzī, *Jawābāt*, 19.

55 *Shukūk*, 199.

> ers] it is not altered; that [whose alteration] alters the species is a form, and that [whose alteration] does not alter [the species] is an accident.[56]

So body consists of a complex of matter and species form. Corporeity, accordingly, belongs to matter, and is not invested to it by a distinct form. Although Abū l-Barakāt is not mentioned in the section, he is clearly the direct source both of this strand of hylomorphism, and of the supporting proof put forth by al-Masʿūdī.

56 *Shukūk*, 199–200.

CHAPTER 7

The Manuscripts and Critical Edition

7.1 The Manuscripts

Four manuscript copies of the *Shukūk* are known, three currently housed in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, and one located in Shiraz.[1] I have obtained copies of all four. What follows is a description of each copy, followed by an introduction to the critical edition.

A *MS Istanbul, Hamidiye 1452, ff. 109^{a}–150^{a}*

An early copy in a composite volume containing miscellaneous philosophical texts, including several epistles by Avicenna, one by each of Ibn al-Haytham and Miskawayh, a short Persian text titled *Fawāʾid dhakhāʾir al-ḥikma* by Ẓahīr al-Dīn al-Bayhaqī (d. 565/1170), referred to as Farīd Khurasan (ff. 150^{a}–152^{a}), and a short epistle on the differentia (*faṣl*) by a certain Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿUthmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Jūrabdhī (ff. 152^{a}–155^{a}).[2] The last figure, on whom I have found hardly any information in other sources, originates from Jūrabdh, a village near Isfarāʾīn in northern Khurasan, and was alive when the copy was produced.[3] The volume is undated, but appears to originate from late-6th/12th-century or early-7th/13th-century Khurasan or Transoxania, judging primarily by the style of script and secondarily by its inclusion of al-Bayhaqī's work and association with al-Jūrabdhī. It was produced after al-Masʿūdī's death, as indicated by the formulaic prayers appended to his name in the incipit and two marginal notes, to be discussed next. The incipit (f. 109^{b}) goes as follows:[4]

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1 References to the three manuscripts in Istanbul are given by Ergin ('İbni Sina Bibliyografyası', 49; 71), and following him by Brockelmann (*GAL Suppl.* I, 817). I have also consulted a microfilm copy housed at the Jafet Memorial Library at the American University of Beirut and established that it is a copy of MS A below.

2 In the catalogue of the Hamidiye Library, the volume is listed only as a composite manuscript, without note of its contents (*Hamidiye Kütüphanesinde*, 78).

3 As is clear from the laudatory formula appended to his name on f. 152^{a}. On Jūrabdh, see al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 3, 353. A short philosophical commentary on a Prophetic *ḥadīth* by al-Jūrabdhī is also extant, but provides no biographical information on him (MS Istanbul, Ahmet III 1461, ff. 34^{a}–35^{a}).

4 I have added dots and *hamza*s, where appropriate, to the Arabic texts reproduced in this section. No other changes or corrections have been made.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة على خير خلقه محمد وآله أجمعين يقول الشيخ الإمام الأجل الكبير شرف الملة والدين ركن الإسلام والمسلمين أستاذ العلماء مقتدى الفريقين حجة الحق محمد بن مسعود المسعودي تغمده الله بغفرانه

Neither this copy of the *Shukūk*, nor any of the other texts included in this composite volume is signed off with a colophon.

The copy is executed in curvilinear *naskh*, with section headings and a diagram inserted in red ink. The margins contain several textual corrections and two collation notes (*balaghat*, on ff. 132[b] and 138[b]). The copy most probably derives from a non-holograph copy. However, it was collated with a holograph—that is, a copy penned in the author's hand—as indicated by two marginal notes in the copyist's hand, both occurring as glosses on Section 8. The first, appearing on f. 135[a], states that the last five words of a sentence are absent from 'the author's copy':[5]

من قوله غير الوجود إلى قوله على الوجود ليست في نسخة المصنف رحمه الله

The second note, appearing on f. 135[b], states that a lengthy passage is absent from 'the copy in the author's hand':[6]

من قوله الوجود الذي لا علة له إلى قوله فإن قيل لو كان ذاتان ليس في النسخة التي كانت بخط المصنف رحمه الله

A second note starting on the same page and continuing onto the next page (f. 136[a]) is an insertion, which apparently transmits the passage that the copyist found in the author's copy in place of the missing passage, which is approximately four times as long as the insertion.[7] This indicates that al-Masʿūdī produced a revised version of the *Shukūk*, and that, assuming that the copyist noted

5 *Shukūk*, 253.

6 The passage corresponds to *Shukūk*, 254.11–258.3.

7 The insertion is reproduced on p. 255 below.

all the differences that he found between the two versions, the only significant revision was made to this one passage in Section 8. Judging by the contents and length of the two variant passages, I estimate that the longer version, transmitted in the main body of the manuscript text (and in MS B, described next), is the later, revised version, and that the marginal variant transmits an earlier version of the *Shukūk*.

The title page (f. 1ᵃ) lists, in a later hand, the texts contained in the composite volume, and gives the title of al-Masʿūdī's work as *Mabāḥith wa-shukūk ʿalā kitāb al-Ishārāt li-l-Masʿūdī*. On f. 109ᵃ, the title is given as *Kitāb al-Mabāḥith wa-l-shukūk*, and followed with a table of contents for the *Shukūk*.[8]

B *MS Shiraz, Madrasa-ʾi Imām-i ʿAṣr, no Number, ff. 1ᵇ–51ᵃ*

An early copy in a composite volume also containing al-Fārābī's *ʿUyūn al-masāʾil* (ff. 45ᵃ–51ᵃ) and al-Kindī's *Risāla fī l-asmāʾ al-mufrada* (ff. 52ᵇ–56ᵃ).[9] The copy is transcribed in an elegant *naskh*, with section headings inserted in red ink. A table of contents for the *Shukūk* is provided on f. 1ᵇ. The title page (f. 2ᵃ) gives the title and the author's name, as follows:

كتاب المباحث والشكوك

تولاها الشيخ الإمام الأجل مولانا شرف الملة والدين علامة الدهر حجة الحق على الخلق أستاذ العلماء مقتدى الفريقين محمد بن مسعود بن محمد المسعودي رحمة الله عليه

The formula, 'may God's mercy be upon him', following the author's name confirms that the copy was produced after his death. The text begins on f. 2ᵇ as follows:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة على خير خلقه محمد وآله أجمعين يقول محمد بن مسعود بن محمد المسعودي

8 The Hamidiye collection, to which this manuscript belongs, was originally the library of the Ottomoan sultan Abdülhamid I (*r.* 1187/1774–1203/1889), who is named in a bequest statement on the title page (f. 1ᵃ). However, the manuscript was in Ottoman lands at least since the turn of the fifteenth century, as MS C is derived from it, as I explain below.

9 A facsimile edition of this copy was published by Mīrāth-i Maktūb, Tehran, in 2011.

According to the copyist's colophon on f. 44ª, the copy was completed on Thursday, 29 Muḥarram 605 (13 August 1208), by a certain Masʿūd ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥtāj al-Gulbarī:

اتفق الفراغ عنه نسخاً ضحوة يوم الخميس التاسع والعشرين من المحرم سنة خمس وستمائة للعبد الضعيف الراجي غفران ربه مسعود بن محمد بن علي بن محتاج

The copyist's name also appears at the end of the two other texts in the volume, hence on ff. 51ª and 56ª. These are dated, respectively, Wednesday, 8 Dhū l-Qaʿda 603 (6 June 1207) and Sunday, 11 Ramaḍān 604 (30 March 1208). Folio 1ª contains an ownership note belonging to Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yaḥyā al-Shīrāzī, that is, the famous early-seventeenth-century philosopher Mullā Ṣadrā.

C *MS Istanbul, Ayasofya 4851, ff. 74ª–121ª*

This copy appears in a composite volume, which also contains eight short epistles by Avicenna. The volume is undated, and none of the texts is signed off with a colophon. The title page (f. 1ª) contains the seals of the Ottoman sultans Bāyezid II (*r.* 886/1481–918/1512) and Maḥmūd I (*r.* 1143/1730–1168/1754), and a bequest statement naming the latter sultan. The copy was most likely produced for Bāyezid II's library.

The copy is executed in a professional *naskh*. Some section headings (Sections 1–3 and 5–8) are inserted in red ink, but the rest were not written in. Likewise, on f. 91ᵇ, blank space was left for a diagram, which was not drawn in. Only four corrections, all minor, appear in the margins.

Folio 1ª contains the titles of the works included in the composite volume, and includes two mentions of the *Shukūk*: *Kitāb al-Shukūk al-Masʿūdī quddisa sirru-hu fī Kitāb al-Ishārāt* (sic.) and *Kitāb al-Shukūk al-Masʿūdiyya li-l-Ishārāt*.[10] On f. 74ª, the title is given as *Kitāb al-Shukūk al-Masʿūdiyya ʿalā matn al-Ishārāt*, and is followed with a table of contents for the text. The text begins on f. 74ᵇ as follows:

10 I am grateful to Himmet Taşkömür, who has been studying the library of Bāyezid II, for informing me that the former note of the title appears to be in the hand of Khayr al-Dīn ʿAṭūfī (d. 948/1541), the cataloguer of this sultan's library (on him, see Ṭāshköprüzāde, *Shaqāʾiq*, 416–417).

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة على خير خلقه
محمد وآله أجمعين يقول الشيخ الإمام الأجل الكبير شرف الملة والدين
ركن الإسلام والمسلمين أستاذ العلماء مقتدى الفريقين حجة الحق محمد
بن مسعود المسعودي تغمده الله بغفرانه

D *MS Istanbul, Pertev Paşa 617, ff. 197^{b}–229^{b}*

This copy appears in a composite volume, also containing several other philosophical texts and miscellaneous excerpts in Arabic and Persian. The volume is undated, but is manifestly Ottoman, probably dating to the 15th or 16th century, judging mainly by the style of script, the paper, and an ownership note for a certain Aḥmad Awḥad al-Dīn Ḥilmī Zāde on f. 1^{a}. The copy is executed in *nastaʿlīq*. No title or table of contents was provided in the original copy. However, a note was added by a later hand in the margin at the beginning of the *Shukūk*, identifying the text as *Iʿtirāḍāt al-Imām Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī ʿalā l-Ishārāt*, and stating that al-Ṭūsī mentions this work in his commentary on *Ishārāt* II.1.11. The text begins on f. 197^{b} as follows:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة على خير خلقه
محمد وآله أجمعين يقول الشيخ الإمام الأجل الكبير شرف الملة والدين
ركن الإسلام والمسلمين أستاذ العلماء مقتدى الفريقين حجة الحق محمد
بن مسعود المسعودي تغمده الله بغفرانه

7.2 Introduction to the Critical Edition

So, we have two earlier manuscripts, MSS A and B, and two later ones, MSS C and D. And as MSS A, C and D are all located in Istanbul, we have reason to suspect that MSS C and D are derived from MS A, and that the three copies form a closed tradition. This suspicion is confirmed through close comparison between the texts of the three copies. The texts of MSS C and D nowhere improve the text of MS A, and they introduce numerous errors to it. That said, the copyist of D occasionally attempts to make minor linguistic corrections to the text, but these are all clearly his own and not based on a different witness.

For instance, he corrects *al-mulāqāt al-madhkūr* (as in MSS A, B and C) to *al-mulāqāt al-madhkūra*. Given that the errors introduced to the text in MS C differ from those introduced to the text in MS D, neither copy is derived from the other.

Therefore, as the two later copies, MSS C and D, make no improvements to the text, they have not been used for the critical edition. For safe measure, however, we collated our edition extensively with both copies.

This leaves us with the two earlier copies, MSS A and B. As evident from the variants noted in the critical apparatus of our edition, the two manuscripts do not replicate the same textual errors, so neither copy derives from the other. In our critical edition, we have collated both copies and attempted to establish the best text without treating either copy as a base manuscript. As already noted, MS A was collated with a holograph copy, which apparently transmitted an earlier recension of the *Shukūk*. The only passage where the earlier recension differs significantly from the later recension transmitted in the main body of both copies is a long marginal note, which we have reproduced on p. 255, separately from the main body of our edition. Two minor differences between the two recensions have been noted in the critical apparatus.

We have also collated citations from the *Ishārāt* with the published edition of this text (ed. S. Dunyā). To give priority to al-Masʿūdī's own reading of Avicenna's text, we have generally refrained from modifying these citations in conformity with the edition, and have instead noted the variants in the critical apparatus. In at least two places (at the beginnings of Sections 8 and 14), our edition improves the published edition of the *Ishārāt*. We have also collated the edited text of the *Shukūk* with citations in al-Rāzī's *Jawābāt*, and one long passage from Section 4 with a quotation in al-Rāzī's *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*,[11] without note of any variants, as no improvements to the edited text have been made in either case.

Any additions made to the text, most notably the substantive section headings which in the manuscripts only appear in the table of contents, are inserted in square brackets. The text has been modified in accordance with modern spelling conventions, and nunation and diacritical marks have been added where relevant.

11 See p. 4, n. 14 above.

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Index of Individuals, Groups and Places

Index of Subjects

CHAPTER 8

المباحث والشكوك على كتاب الإشارات

شرف الدين المسعودي

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كتاب المباحث والشكوك[1]

فهرست المسائل التي وقع البحث عنها في هذا الكتاب:

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[1]Title: A (109ᵃ), B (2ᵃ). Table of contents: A (109ᵃ), B (1ᵇ). [2]A: – يه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة على خير خلقه محمد وآله أجمعين. يقول محمد ابن مسعود بن محمد المسعودي:[1]

هذه شكوك وشبه عرضت لي في بعض المواضع من كتاب الإشارات. وما أنا من حلها يائس، فإنّ لله في أيام دهركم نفحات. فحررتها تقييداً للأوابد، وأضفتُ إليها ما تقرر عندي وانتهى إليه[2] بحثي في بعض المسائل. وأسأل الله تعالى أن ينور البصيرةَ بالهداية إلى الحق وأن يجنبنا الباطل والضلال. فلقد كان في دعائه صلى الله عليه وسلم: أللهم أرنا الأشياء كما هي، وأرنا الحق حقاً وارزقنا اتباعه، والباطل باطلاً وارزقنا اجتنابه.

وألقيتُ هذه الشكوك إلى أفاضل زماني، عسى أن يحملوا عني بعض أعبائها. فإن سالك الطريق قد يحوج إلى مرشد ورفيق. فأقول، وبالله التوفيق:

[1]From B. For the incipit of A, see p. 170 above. [2]B: الى

المسألة الأولى:

[في إثبات الهيولى]

قال الشيخ أبو علي في النمط الأول من كتاب الإشارات: "قد علمتَ أن للجسم مقداراً ثخيناً متصلاً، وأنه قد يعرض له انفصال وانفكاك. وتعلم أن المتصل بذاته غير القابل للاتصال والانفصال قبولاً يكون هو بعينه الموصوف بالأمرين. فإذن قوة هذا القبول غير وجود المقبول بالفعل وغير هيئته وصورته. وتلك القوة لغير ما هو ذات المتصل بذاته الذي عند الانفصال يعدم ويوجد غيره وعند عود الاتصال يعود | مثله | متجدداً".[1]

B 3[a] A 110[a]

أقول: غرضه من هذا الكلام أن يبين أن الجسم مركب من الهيولى والصورة. دل عليه قوله بعد ذلك، "أليس قد بان لك أن المقدار من حيث هو مقدار[2] والصورة الجرمية من حيث هي صورة جرمية مقارنة لما يقوم معه، ويكون صورة فيه، ويكون ذلك هيولاها"، إلى آخره.[3]

وهذا الكلام لا يفي بهذا الغرض. لأن الذي يلزم من هذا أن ها هنا اتصالاً وقابلاً له، وهما متغايران. وهذا لا شك فيه. إلا أن لقائل أن يقول: إن هذا الاتصال الذي يُعدَم عند الانفصال ويعود مثله عند عدم الانفصال هو عرض من باب الكمية المتصلة، وموضوعه القابل له هو هذا الجسم. فإن الشمعة الواحدة مثلاً لها مقدار وثخن واتصال، ثم قد يعرض لها انفصال

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[1] *Ishārāt*, 2, 168–173. [2] B: مقدارا [3] *Ishārāt*, 2, 182–183.

وانفكاك بأن تُجزّأ أجزاء وتقسَّم أقساماً وتُجعل قطعاً متعددة متفرقة. فالذي يبطل ويرتفع بهذا التقطيع والتفريق هي الوحدة التي كانت فيها والمقدار الذي كان لها والاتصال الذي كان بالفعل موجوداً فيها بين ما يُفرَض لها أجزاء. ولا يخفى أن جميع هذه أعراض تطرأ على الجسم وتزول، وحقيقة الجسم لا تتبدل لا بطريانها ولا بارتفاعها. فإن كل جزء يُفصل عن الشمعة هي شمعة مثل التي فُصلت عنها لا يختلفان إلا في عرض من الأعراض، كالمقدار وغيره. وإن كل جسم فله مقدار واتصال، وإن ذلك المقدار والاتصال قد يرتفع ويزول، وقد يعود يتجدد مثله فيه، والجسمية بعده وقبله | (B 3b) باقية بحالها، لأن الصورة المقوِّمة لها باقية في الحالتين. وتلك الصورة[1] غير هذا الاتصال | (A 110b) الذي فيه بالفعل. فلا بدّ من الدليل على أن تلك الصورة موجودة في شيء آخر، يسمى هيولى ومادة، حتى نتبين أن الجسم مركب منهما، أي من الهيولى والصورة.

وبم تنكرون على من يقول بأن حقيقة كل جسم هي صورته النوعية، وهي بسيطة لا تركيب فيها؟ فالجسم الذي هو شمع مثلاً حقيقته صورة الشمعية، إلا أنها في الوجود لا تخلو عن مقدار ووحدة أو كثرة واتصال بين ما يُفرض لها أجزاءً أو انفصالٍ. وهذه كلها أعراض لها تتوارد عليها، ولا يغير شيء من ذلك حقيقتها وماهيتها. فلا بدّ من البرهان على أن هذه الصورة غير قائمة بذاتها، بل هي في قابل لها هي مادتها وهيولاها. وما ذكرتم من أن ها هنا قابلاً للاتصال، وهو غير الاتصال المقبول، فلا يفيد هذا المطلوب.

[1] B: + هى

فإن القابل الذي بينتم هو حقيقة الجسم، والمقبول الذي هو الاتصال هو عرض من الأعراض، موضوعه هذا الجسم. والله أعلم.

وأما الذي انتهى إليه البحث[1] في إثبات الهيولى هو أنا نعلم أن من الأجسام ما يتبدل عليه النوعية، فيزايله الأمر الذي به[2] تحققت ماهيته، ويحدث فيه أمر آخر به يصير نوعاً آخر وحقيقة أخرى، ويبقى منه في الحالين شيء لا يبطل ولا ينعدم. كالبيض إذا تفرّخ مثلاً، وكالنطفة إذا تولد منها حيوان، وكالحنطة | (B 4a) إذا طُحنت وعجنت وخبزت وأكلت حتى صارت في المعدة كيلوساً وفي الكبد دماً وفي أعضاء البدن لحماً وعظماً، إلى غير ذلك من الأجسام المختلفة الحقائق والماهيات. فالحنطة لا تبطل ولا تنعدم بالكلية بالطحن | (A 111a) والخبز، بل يبطل منها[3] الأمر الذي به كان حنطة، ويحدث فيه أمر آخر به صار نوعاً آخر. وكذا في كل طور من الأطوار، يبقى منه شيء ويبطل شيء، فيصير ذلك الشيء الباقي تارة دماً وتارة لحماً وعظماً، إلى غير ذلك. فقد قضى العقل بأن في جسم الحنطة شيئاً اقترن به شيء آخر لحصل من مجموعهما الحنطة، ثم فارقه الشيء المقترن به إلى بدل اقترن به أيضاً لحصل الخبز، ثم زايله هذا الثاني إلى متعقّب آخر لحصل الدم، ثم انعدم هذا المتعقّب وحدث فيه شيء آخر لحصل اللحم، إلى غير ذلك من الأطوار والأحوال. وقد بقي ذلك الشيء في الأطوار كلها لا ينعدم البتة وتتبدل عليه هذه الأمور. فذلك الشيء الذي يقبل هذه الأمور ويحملها هو الذي نُعبِّر عنه

[1]B: + عنه [2]A: – به [3]B: منه

بالهيولى والمادة. وهي مما لا يدرَك بشيء[1] من الحواس، وإنما يُعرَف بشهادة العقل. وهذه الأشياء المتبدلة نسميها الصور والأعراض. وقد عرفت الفرق بين الصورة والعرض. فإن من هذه الأشياء ما تتبدل به النوعية، ومنها ما لا يتبدل. فالذي يبدِّل النوعيةَ هي الصورة، والذي لا يبدِّل هو العرض.[2]

[1]A: شي [2]B: + والله اعلم

المسألة الثانية:

[في إثبات تناهي الأجسام]

قال الشيخ أبو علي: "يجب أن | [B 4b] يكون محقَّقاً عندك أنه لا يمتد بُعد في ملاء أو خلاء، إن جاز وجوده، إلى غير النهاية. وإلا فمن الجائز أن يُفرض امتدادان غير متناهيين من مبدأ واحد لا يزال البُعد بينهما يتزايد. ومن الجائز أن يفرض بينهما أبعاد تتزايد بقدر واحد من الزيادات. ومن الجائز أن يُفرض[1] بينهما | [A 111b] هذه الأبعاد إلى غير النهاية، فيكون هناك إمكان زيادات على أول تفاوت يفرض بغير نهاية. ولأن كل زيادة توجد فإنها مع المزيد عليه قد توجد في واحد، وأية زيادات أمكنت[2] فيمكن أن يكون هناك بُعد يشتمل على جميع ذلك الممكن"، إلى آخر ما ذكر.[3]

قلت: إن لقائل أن يقول: بلى، هذه الزيادات يمكن فرضها إلى غير النهاية. وكل زيادة توجد فإنها مع المزيد عليه[4] قد توجد في بُعد واحد. أما مع هذا، فلم قلتَ إنه يلزم من ذلك أن يكون هناك إمكان أن يوجد بُعد بين الامتدادين الأولين فيه تلك الزيادات الموجودة بغير نهاية، حتى يلزم منه أن يكون ما لا يتناهى محصوراً بين حاصرين؟

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[1]B: تنفرض [2]B: امكن [3]*Ishārāt*, 2, 183–190. [4]A: إليه

بل نقول: يستحيل أن يوجد بُعد واحد تكون فيه تلك الزيادات التي لا يتناهى عددها، ولا يمكن فرض وجوده البتة. لأن الأبعاد الممكنة بين الامتدادين لا يتناهى عددها ولا آخر لها، وما من بُعد يُفرض إلا ويمكن بَعده بُعد آخر أزيد وأطول منه، هكذا إلى غير النهاية. والبعد الذي نفرضه مشتملاً على الزيادات التي لا نهاية لعددها لو أمكن وجوده لكان أطول الأبعاد الممكنة، ولكان لا يمكن أن يوجد بَعده | بُعد آخر أزيد وأطول منه. (B 5a) إذ لو أمكن ذلك لكان هذا الممكن الثاني مشتملاً على زيادة لا يشتمل عليها المفروض الأول، فلم يكن الأول مشتملاً على جميع الزيادات التي لا يتناهى عددها، بل على عدد[1] محدود منها، وقد فرضناه[2] مشتملاً على الكل. فإذن لا يمكن أن يشتمل الثاني على زيادة لا يشتمل عليها الأول، | فلم (A 112a) يكن الثاني أطول من الأول. فكان الأول بُعداً لا يمكن أن يوجد بَعده بُعد أطول منه، فيكون آخر الأبعاد الممكنة. وهذا محال، إلا على تقدير أن ينقطع الامتدادان ولا ينفذان بعده.

والذي يؤكِّد هذا الكلام هو أن الامتدادين المذكورين والزيادات والأبعاد التي بينهما ليست أموراً محقَّقة موجودة بالفعل في جسم العالم، إنما هي أمور متوهَّمة مفروضة فيها. فما يتقاصر الذهن عن فرضه من جملتها، فلا وجود له أصلاً، لا في الذهن ولا خارج الذهن. وقد تقاصر الذهن عن تقدير بُعد بين الامتدادين ليس وراءه بُعد آخر أطول منه. بل كل ما

[1] A: عدد is crossed out. B: – عدد [2] A B: فرضناها

ينصرف إليه الوهم ويفرضه موجوداً في الذهن فهو محدود متناه في ذاته، يمكننا أن نتوهم بُعداً آخر أكثر منه، ولا ينتهي هذا الإمكان إلى حدّ ليس وراءه إمكان آخر.

اعتَبِرْ لطرف الزيادة بطرف النقصان. أليس أنّ كل جسم فيمكن تجزئته في الوهم إلى غير النهاية، وتلك الأجزاء تكون أجساماً لا محالة، ولكل واحد منها مقدار؟ ثم لا يقال بأن كل جسم متناهي المقدار يشتمل على مقادير لا يتناهى عددها، لأنه مشتمل | على أجسام صغار غير متناهية العدد، B 5b وكل واحد منها ذو مقدار، فيكون المقدار المتناهي من الجسم الأول مركباً من مقادير لا يتناهى عددها. ولكن قيل: هذه الأجزاء والأقسام ليست موجودة فيه بالفعل، بل الجسم في ذاته واحد لا جزء فيه، فهو في ذاته كما هو عند الحس. | فكما لا ينتهي طرف النقصان إلى حدّ لا يمكننا أن نتوهم A 112b أصغر منه، فكذا طرف الزيادة لا ينتهي إلى حدّ لا يمكننا أن نتوهم أكبر منه.

فقد تبين بهذه الجملة امتناع تقدير بُعد بين الامتدادين مشتمل على زيادات لا يتناهى عددها. فلا يلزم ذلك المحال الذي ادعى لزومه، وهو أن ما لا يتناهى يكون محصوراً بين حاصرين.

ثم إن صح البرهان الذي ذكره، فهذا الذي نذكره أوضح منه من غير تلك التطويلات. فنقول: نفرض الامتدادين اللذين[1] خرجا من مبدأ واحد محيطين بزاوية منفرجة. فيصيران مع أي بُعد كان من الأبعاد التي نفرض بينهما

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[1] A B: الذين

مثلثاً منفرج الزاوية متساوي الساقين المحيطين بالزاوية المنفرجة. ولا شك أن وتر الزاوية المنفرجة أعظم من كل واحد من الساقين، بيّنه أقليدس في المقالة الأولى. فإذا كان الامتدادان غير متناهيين، كانت القاعدة التي هي أطول من كل واحد من غير المتناهيين أيضاً غير متناهية. وهي مع أنها غير متناهية، فمحصورة بين حاصرين. هذا خلف. والإشكال عليه ما سبق. والله أعلم.[1]

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[1] B: – والله أعلم

المسألة الثالثة: | B 6a

[في أنّ القوة الحافظة للمزاج هي النفس]

قال في النمط الثالث في الإشارة التي أولها، "هو ذا يتحرك الحيوان بشيء غير جسميته[1]": "ولأن المزاج واقع فيه بين أضداد متنازعة إلى الانفكاك، إنما يجبِرها[2] على الالتئام والامتزاج قوة غير ما يتبع التئامها من المزاج. وكيف وعلة الالتئام وحافظه من[3] قبل الالتئام، فكيف لا يكون قبل ما بعده؟ | وهذا الالتئام كلما[4] يلحق الجامع الحافظ وهن أو عدم يتداعى إلى الانفكاك. فأصل القوى المدركة والمحركة[5] والحافظة للمزاج شيء آخر لك أن تسميه النفس،[6] وهذا هو الجوهر الذي يتصرف في أجزاء بدنك، ثم في بدنك". A 113a

ثم **قال**: "فهذا الجوهر فيك واحد، بل هو أنت عند التحقيق. وله فروع وقوى[7] منبثة في أعضائك".[8]

قلت: وهذا فيه نظر. فإنه جعل النفس الناطقة البشرية حافظةً لمزاج البدن، سابقةً على الالتئام الذي[9] يقع بين الكيفيات المتضادة المتداعية إلى الانفكاك، قاسرةً إياها على الامتزاج. وليس يخفى أن النفس الناطقة إنما تحدث بعد تمام خلقة البدن، وبعد حصول الاستعداد الذي يحصل

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[1]B: جسمية [2]*Ishārāt*: يجرها [3]*Ishārāt*: – من [4]A B: كما [5]*Ishārāt*: المحركة والمدركة [6]A: + الناطقة [7]*Ishārāt*: فروع من قوى [8]*Ishārāt*, 2, 350–357. [9]A: التي

باعتدال المزاج فيه، لتعلقها به، ولأنْ يكون آلةً لها. وتمام الاستعداد بتمام المزاج وتمام خلقة الأعضاء. فلا يمكن أن تكون علة ذلك هي النفس الناطقة التي تحدث بعدها. وهذا ظاهر لا شك فيه.

بلى،[1] لا بد وأن تكون هناك قوة سابقة يصدر عنها هذه الأفعال في البدن، ولا بأس بتسميتها نفساً. | لكنها غير النفس الناطقة، فإن تلك القوة موجودة B 6b لسائر الحيوانات، بل هي موجودة للنبات. وتمام هذا الكلام ينكشف بذكر طرف من أمر القوى، فأقول: القوى الفعالة في الأجسام إنما يراد بها أشياء تصدر عنها الأفعال. وكون[2] الشيء مصدراً للفعل أعم من كونه جوهراً أو عرضاً. فمصدر الفعل من حيث هو كذلك لا يُفهم منه إلا أنه شيء ما، أيّ شيء كان، | يوجَد منه الفعلُ. ثم من الممكن أن يكون ذلك الشيء A 113b جوهراً قائماً بذاته، كالقوة الناطقة التي هي جوهر النفس الإنسانية. ومن الممكن أن يكون عرضاً موجوداً في موضوع، كسائر القوى البدنية التي هي كيفيات موجودة في البدن، وهي مصادر الأفعال ومبادئها. ثم من هذه القوى ما يُسمَّى طبيعة أو طبعاً، كقوة الإحراق مثلاً في النار، فيقال النار محرقة بالطبع، ولها طبيعة الإحراق. ومنها ما يسمى نفساً، فيقال نفس حيوانية ونفس نباتية، كما يقال نفس ناطقة.

ويراد بالنفوس النباتية الأشياءُ التي من شأنها أن يصدر عنها أفعال مخصوصة في النبات يحتاج إليها في بقاء شخصه أو بقاء نوعه. فمنها ما يسمَّى قوة غاذية، وهي في الحقيقة قوى كثيرة عُرِفت كثرتُها بكثرة أصناف

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[1] A B: بل [2] A: ويكون

الأفعال، مثل جذب الغذاء وإمساك المجذوب وإحالته وهضمه وتشبيهه[1] بجوهر النبات وإلصاقه به ودفع الفضلة. ومنها القوة النامية، وهي تحتاج إلى هذه | القوى أيضاً. ومنها القوة المولِّدة، كما عرفتَ تفاصيلها. B 7a

وهذه القوى في النبات من الممكن أن[2] تحدث في أول وجوده دفعة واحدة. ومن الممكن أن تحدث شيئاً فشيئاً في أوقات مختلفة بحسب الاستعداد، حتى أن المولِّدة لا تحدث مع الغاذية والنامية، بل بعدهما بالزمان عند الحاجة إليها. فإن الأمزجة الحاصلة مما يتبدل ويتغير، والاستعدادات تابعة للأمزجة. وأسباب التبدل بعضها أرضية وبعضها سماوية. ومن الأسباب السماوية | حركات الأفلاك وطوالعها A 114a ونظر الكواكب بعضها إلى بعض وامتزاجاتها، إما بتوسط نفوسها أو دون ذلك. فإنها في الجملة مما يغيِّر[3] الأمزجة ويُحدث كيفيات مخصوصة هي استعدادات لقبول صور مختلفة وقوى مختلفة. فتفيض بحسبها من المفارق الفعال هذه الصور والقوى. فصورة النبات تحدث في[4] مادته بفيض من المفارق بتوسط القوى الفائضة منه التي هي بحسب الاستعدادات المختلفة.

فالنفس النباتية إما أن تكون عبارة عن مجموع هذه القوى، وإما أن تكون قوةً واحدة تقوم بها هذه القوى وتتفرع منها وتتشعب. ويجوز أن تقوم القوة بالقوة، إذ العرض جاز أن يقوم بالعرض، كالسرعة تقوم بالحركة، والصفاء باللون.

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[1] A: تشبّهه [2] B: – أن [3] A: يتغير [4] A: من

ومثل هذه القوة التي سميناها نفساً نباتية موجودة في بدن الإنسان. لكنها باعتبار وجودها في بدن | B 7b الإنسان، بل في بدن الحيوان، تسمى طبيعة. ووجودها فيه أقدم من حدوث النفس الناطقة. فالمتصرف في أجزاء البدن وفي البدن قبل حدوث النفس الناطقة وبعد الحدوث هي هذه القوى. فهي الحافظة للمزاج والالتئام والامتزاج، لا النفس الناطقة.

فإن قيل: المتصرِّف في بدن الجنين وأجزاء بدنه قبل حدوث النفس الناطقة هي نفس الأم، فإذا حدثت النفس الناطقة انتقلت إليها نوبة التصرف. قلنا: هذه القوى التي ذكرناها مما لا يمكن إنكارها، ويُشعَر بثبوتها.

قوله، "وهذا الجوهر فيك واحد، وله فروع وقوى منبثة في أعضائك". فإن كانت هذه التصرفات | A 114b في البدن من أفعال النفس الناطقة، فأي فائدة في وجود هذه القوى؟ بل[1] وبم يُعرَف وجودُها؟ فإنا إنما نحكم بوجود القوة ضرورةَ وجود الفعل. فإذا لم يكن لها فعل، فأي دليل دلنا على وجودها؟ فالنفوس النباتية والحيوانية والإنسانية إنما تُعرف بآثارها وأفعالها. فلما رأينا الأفعال مختلفة، قضينا بأن هناك قوى مختلفة سميناها نفوساً. فالتي سميناها نفساً نباتيةً موجودة في الحيوان مع زيادة شيء. والتي هي موجودة في الحيوانات موجودة في الإنسان مع زيادة شيء. ولا يُستبعَد أن يكون المتصرِّف في أجزاء بدن الجنين قبل خلق الحياة فيه هي نفس الأم، لكن نفسها النباتية والحيوانية لا نفسها الناطقة. والله أعلم.

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[1] B: – بل

المسألة الرابعة:

[في حقيقة الإدراكات وأحوال الحواس الظاهرة والباطنة]

قال الشيخ، رحمه الله: "إدراك الشيء | هو أن تكون حقيقته متمثِّلةً عند B 8a المدرِك يشاهدها ما به يدرك. فإما أن تكون تلك الحقيقة نفس حقيقة الشيء الخارج عن المدرِك إذا أدرك، فتكون حقيقة ما لا وجود له بالفعل في الأعيان الخارجية،[1] مثل كثير من الأشكال الهندسية، بل كثير من المفروضات التي لا تمكن إذا فُرضت في الهندسة، مما لا يتحقق أصلاً. أو يكون مثال حقيقته مرتسماً في ذات المدرِك غير مباين له، وهو الباقي".[2]

وقال أيضاً: "اعلم أنك سيتبيّن[3] لك أن المرتسم بالصورة المعقولة منا شيء غير جسم ولا في جسم، وأن المرتسم بالصورة التي قبلها قوة في جسم أو جسم. وأنت تعلم أن شعور القوة بما تدركه هو ارتسام صورته فيها، وأن الصورة إذا كانت | حاصلة في القوة لم تغب عنها القوة. أرأيت القوة إن غابت عنها، ثم A 115a عاودتها والتفتت إليها، هل يكون قد حدث هناك غيرُ تمثلها فيها؟"[4]

قلت: إنه جعل حقيقة الإدراك حصول مثال المدرَك في ذات المدرِك. والقوة المدرِكة تنقسم إلى جسمانية وغير جسمانية. فغير الجسمانية هي القوة

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[1]Cf. *Ishārāt*, 2, 362. A B: الخارجة [2]*Ishārāt*, 2, 359–366. [3]B: يستبين [4]*Ishārāt*, 2, 396–398.

العاقلة التي يُعبَّر عنها بالنفس الناطقة. ومدرَكاتها إما كليات، وهي الصور[1] المعقولة والحقائق المجردة عن المواد، ووجودها في الأذهان فقط، وإما جزئيات، وهي ذوات موجودة في الأعيان مجردة عن المواد الجسمانية مفارقة لها مبرأة عنها قائمة بذواتها، كذات الأول تبارك وتعالى، وذوات B 8b العقول والنفوس. وأما الجسمانية، فهي الحواس | الظاهرة والباطنة، ومدرَكاتها جميع الأجسام وما يتعلق بها من الصور والأعراض والأمور المتخيَّلة والمتوهَّمة مما يكون لها مثال في الخارج أو لا يكون، ككثير من الأشكال الهندسية التي لا وجود لها في الخارج أصلاً.

فإدراك القوة العاقلة لمدرَكاتها هو ملاقاة حصلت بين القوة العاقلة وبين صور الحقائق المعقولة. وأعني بالملاقاة ارتسام القوة بها وحصول تلك الصور فيها، فهو حقيقة تعقُّل الشيء وحقيقة العلم والشعور بالشيء.

وإدراك القوة الجسمانية لمدرَكاتها هو ملاقاة حصلت بين القوة وبين مثال الشيء المدرَك، وهو ارتسام القوة بمثال الشيء المدرَك. وبيان ذلك أن القوى الجسمانية التي تسري من القلب أو الدماغ إلى أعضاء البدن إذا A 115b وصلت إلى العضو الذي هو آلتها في الإدراك، وحدث | في العضو أيضاً كيفية مثل كيفية الشيء المدرَك، فيجتمع في العضو الواحد القوة مع الكيفية، فيحصل بينهما ملاقاة واجتماع في موضوع واحد. فتلك الملاقاة يُعبَّر عنها بالإحساس والإدراك.

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[1] B: الصورة

مثاله قوة اللمس المودَعة في بشرة اليد مثلاً، فإنها تدرك الحرارة القائمة بالأجسام الحارة. فإذا لمسنا الجسم الحار باليد، انفعلت بشرة اليد عن تلك الحرارة، أي حدثت فيها حرارة مشابهة لتلك الحرارة، واجتمعت الحرارة الحادثة مع قوة اللمس في ظاهر البشرة اجتماعَ عرضين في موضوع واحد، وحصل بينهما ملاقاة، فهو حقيقة الإحساس بتلك | [B 9a] الحرارة والإدراك لها.

وكذا في جميع المحسوسات. فقوة الذوق مودعة في ظاهر اللسان، وكيفية الطعم قائمة بالشيء المطعوم. فإذا وصل المطعوم إلى اللسان انفعل عنه اللسان، وحدث فيه كيفية مشابهة لذلك الطعم من الحلاوة أو الحموضة أو غيرها،[1] فحصلت ملاقاة واجتماع بينهما وبين القوة المودَعة فيه، فهي حقيقة[2] إدراك الطعم. فالمدرَك المحسوس، أي[3] الذي يشاهده الحس ويلاقيه في الحقيقة، هو مثال الطعم القائم بالمطعوم والحرارة القائمة بالجسم الحار، لا نفس تلك الحرارة والطعم.

هكذا في جميع المحسوسات. فإن القوة الباصرة القائمة بالروح الذي في العصبة المجوفة التي في العين تدرِك المبصَرات التي هي ألوان الأجسام وأشكالها ومقاديرها. وحقيقة ذلك الإبصار هي ملاقاة بين القوة وبين مُثُل تلك الألوان والأشكال، فيحدث في هذا الروح | [A 116a] كيفية مشابهة للون الجسم المرئي وشكله كما تحدث الصورة في المرآة، فتجتمع القوة الباصرة وتلك الكيفية الحادثة في الروح الذي في العصبة، فذلك الاجتماع والملاقاة هي

[1] B: غيره [2] A: + قوة [3] B: – أي

حقيقة الرؤية والإبصار. فإذن حقيقة الإدراك هي ملاقاة المدرِك[1] لمثال المدرَك.

ثم هذا المثال قد يكون مثال حقيقة شيء موجود في الأعيان، كما ذكرنا. وقد لا يكون، كتَمثُّل الأشكال الهندسية في الذهن، كما سبق ذكرُه. وعند هذا تسميته مثالاً تجَوُّز لا حقيقة. إذ المثال إنما يكون | مثالاً إذا كان ثمة B 9b شيء آخر يماثله هذا ويطابقه، فهو بهذا الاعتبار مثال. فإذا لم يكن هناك شيء آخر، فلا يكون هذا في الحقيقة مثالاً. إلا أن المقصود هو أن هذا الشيء الحاصل عند القوة قد يكون مثالاً لحقيقة أخرى خارجة عن الذهن، وقد لا يكون.

وهذا الذي حكيناه هو ما اتفق عليه الأكثرون. أما الذي انتهى إليه البحث والنظر هو أن حقيقة الإدراك أمر وراء الملاقاة. بل هي حالة إضافية للمدرِك إلى الشيء المدرَك، يُعبَّر عن تلك الحالة بالظهور والكشف والشعور والعلم، ولا يمكن تعريفها بالحد والرسم، كما لا يمكن تعريف الوجود بهما. أما الحد الحقيقي الذي يُتعرَّض فيه للجنس والفصل، كما عرّفناه في المنطق، فلا يخفى امتناع التعريف به. وأما الرسم فهو لتعريف الخفي، ولا شيء أعرف وأشهر من العلم والمعرفة، كما لا شيء أظهر وأوضح من الوجود.

ومما يدل على أن الإدراك أمر وراء الملاقاة والتمثل أنا ندرك ذواتنا. أي القوة المدرِكة منا، | التي هي حقيقة نفسنا العالمة بحقائق الأشياء، تعلم ذاتها A 116b وتشعر بها. ومن المحال أن يرتسم في ذاتنا صورةُ ذاتنا. وإن ثبتت في جوهر

[1] A: – المدرك

نفسنا صورة مطابقة من جميع الوجوه لصورة نفسنا، فيجتمع فيها صورتان لها. فقد عُرِف أن السوادين لا يجتمعان في موضوع واحد. فإن كان حقيقة الإدراك هو هذا الارتسام والملاقاة—وذلك لا يُعقَل إلا بين اثنين—فلا[1] اثنينية ها هنا، | فلا ارتسام ولا ملاقاة، فلا شعور ولا إدراك. لكن الشعور B 10a والإدراك حاصل. فليس حقيقة الشعور والإدراك هي حقيقة الارتسام والملاقاة.

فإن قيل: الملاقاة بين القوة المدرِكة وبين الشيء المدرَك يكون إدراكاً، لأن حالةَ الملاقاةِ يكون الشيء حاصلاً حاضراً عند القوة المدرِكة مشاهَداً لها غير غائب عنها. والشيء أقرب إلى ذاته من الغير الحاضر عنده، فالقوة العاملة منا أقرب إلى ذاتها من غيرها الحاضر عندها، فهي أبداً حاضرة لذاتها غير غائبة عنها. فالغير الحاضر لما كان مدرَكاً لها، فذاتها أولى. فكان الارتسام والملاقاة هي حضور الشيء عنده، ونفسنا حاضرة لنفسنا غير غائبة عنها. فذلك الحضور هو الإدراك، وإن لم تكن اثنينية وتغاير، فإن ذلك يقع ضائعاً فيما يرجع إلى حقيقة الحضور والحصول[2] الذي هو حقيقة الإدراك.

قلنا: إن صحّ هذا، فليكن شعورُنا بذواتنا[3] حاصلاً بالفعل دائماً. لأن الملاقاة والحضور إذا كان حاصلاً بالفعل كان الشعور حاصلاً بالفعل،[4] إن كان دائماً كان الشعورُ دائماً، وإن كان في وقت كان | الشعور في وقت. وشعورنا A 117a بذواتنا ليس بالفعل دائماً، بل تارة بالفعل وتارة بالقوة القريبة من الفعل.

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[1] B: ولا [2] A: والحضور [3] A: بذاتنا [4] A: – كان الشعور حاصلاً بالفعل

وهذا لا شك فيه. فإن النائم والمغمى عليه لا يشعر بذاته، بل اليقظان في أكثر أحواله غافل عن ذاته ليس له شعور بالفعل بها، وخصوصاً إذا كان مشتغلاً بفكر آخر| ملتفتاً إلى معقول أو محسوس ناظراً فيه لا غير، فيكون ما[1] B 10b سوى الملتفَت إليه معلوماً بالقوة لا بالفعل. فإن كان علمنا بذاتنا هو حضور ذاتنا لذاتنا، فذاتنا حاضرة بالفعل دائماً، فليكن العلم بالفعل دائماً. فحين لم يكن كذلك، عُلِم أن الشعور أمر آخر سوى الحضور والملاقاة.

ومما يدل عليه أن كل واحد منا يعلم ذاته، ويعلم أنه يعلم ذاته، ويعلم أنه عالم بعلمه بذاته، وهكذا إلى غير النهاية. ولا شك أن العلم بالذات غير العلم بالعلم بالذات. فالمعلوم في أحدهما هو الذات، وفي الآخر هو العلم بالذات. ولا يخفى أن هذه العلوم لنا بالقوة لا بالفعل، ولنا أن نجعلها بالفعل متى شئنا. فإذا جعلناها بالفعل، فأي ملاقاة وحضور حدثت هناك لم تكن موجودة قبل ذلك؟

والذي يزيده بياناً أن الواحد منا إذا علم ذاته، كان العالم والمعلوم والعلم، على موجب كلامكم، شيئاً واحداً، وهو حقيقة نفسه الناطقة العاقلة. وإذا علم أنه علم ذاتَه، كان هذا علماً آخر غير العلم الأول. والمعلوم في هذا العلم الثاني هو العلم الأول، لكن العلم الأول هو ذاته، فالمعلوم في هذا العلم الثاني هو ذاته. فالعلم والعالم والمعلوم في العلم الثاني ما هو العلم والعالم| والمعلوم في A 117b العلم الأول. فمهما كان العلم بالذات حاصلاً بالفعل، لزم أن يكون العلم بالعلم بالذات أيضاً حاصلاً بالفعل، لأن الكل عبارة عن شيء واحد هو ذاته،

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[1] B: بنا

والشيء الواحد في حالة واحدة إما أن | (B 11a) يكون بالقوة أو بالفعل. ثم قولنا، هذه العلوم لنا بالقوة لا بالفعل، هو كقولنا، ذاتنا حاصلة بالقوة لا بالفعل، ولا يخفى بطلان هذا القول. فصح أن العلم بالذات غير حقيقة الذات، بل هو أمر إضافي لذاتنا من حيث هو عالم إلى ذاتنا من حيث هو معلوم. والعلم بالعلم بالذات أمر إضافي للذات إلى ذلك الأمر الإضافي الأول، لا إلى الذات. فالمعلوم في العلم الثاني غير المعلوم في العلم الأول. فصح أن حقيقة العلم والإدراك أمر وراء الملاقاة المذكورة.[1]

ثم القول بانقسام المدرِك إلى جسماني لا يدرِك غير المحسوسات، وإلى غير جسماني لا يدرِك غير المعقولات، قول مشهور مقبول اتفق عليه الجمهور، ولم يخالفهم فيه إلا أفضل زماننا الذي خصه تعالى بمزيد البحث والنظر،[2] وهو صاحب المعتبر، شكر الله سعيه وأحسن جزاءه. وأنت لو سلكت منهج الإنصاف وتركت الميل والعصبية ولاحظتَ المذاهب بعين الاعتبار، عرفتَ أن الحق هو ما ذهب إليه. لأنك لا تشك في أنك تسمع الأصوات وتبصر الألوان والأشكال وتدرك بعض المعقولات. ولا تشك أيضاً في أنك واحد بالعدد ولست باثنين. وليست ذاتك الواحدة هي القوى المتعددة التي تزعم أنها في شخصك. وهذا | (A 118a) كله مما لا يرتاب فيه عاقل. فإن كان المدرِك للمعقولات غير المدرِك للمحسوسات، فجوهر ذاتك الذي هو أنت عند التحقيق لم يدركهما جميعاً. إذ لو أدركهما، لكان المدرِك | (B 11b) لهما

[1] A B: المذكور   [2] B: – والنظر

واحداً، أو لكنت أنت اثنين لا واحداً بالعدد. فالقوة التي تدرِك المعقولاتِ منك هي[1] جوهر نفسك الناطقة التي هي أنت، لست غيرها ولا هي غيرك. والقوة التي تدرِك المحسوسات إن كانت غير جوهرك الذي هو أنت، فأنت إذن ما أبصرت وما سمعت ولا أمكنك ذلك، بل غيرك الذي سمع وأبصر. وإن كانت عينَ جوهركَ—حتى كنت تسمع وتبصر كما تعقل— كان المدرِك للكل هي ذاتك ونفسك الواحدة.

فإن قلتَ: إن القوة الباصرة التي في العين آلة لي تدرِك وتبصر، ثم تؤدي ما أدركته إليَّ لعلاقة بيني وبينها، فيحصل لي شعور بالشيء الذي أدركَته الآلة. قلنا لك: وبعد التأدية إليك، هل تدرك أنت الشيء المبصَر كما أدركته الآلة أم لا؟ فإن قلتَ نعم، فإدراكك غير وإدراك الآلة غير، وإدراك الآلة يقع ضائعاً في إدراكك، وهو بمنزلة إدراك زيد وعمرو مع إدراكك. فإنك لا تحتاج في إدراكك إلى إدراك آلتك، إنما تحتاج إلى التأدية إليك. فهلاّ قلتَ: إن شبح المبصَراتِ ينطبع في العين، ثم يتأدى منها[2] إلى النفس بقوة مؤدية إليها، لا بقوة مدرِكة، إذ الحاجة إلى المؤدية لا إلى المدرِكة؟! وإن قلتَ أنا لا أدرك بعد التأدية إلي، فأنت إذن ما أبصرتَ وما أدركتَ، لكن علمتَ بأن العين | A 118b التي هي آلتك، أو[3] القوة الباصرة التي فيها، قد أبصرت وأدركت شيئاً. وهذا العلم غير وحقيقة الرؤية غير، فالعلم بالإبصار لا يكون إبصاراً البتة. غير أني | B 12a ما أظنك تشك في أنك تبصر وتسمع.

1A: هى is crossed out. 2B: منهما 3B: و

فإذن القوة الباصرة والسامعة فيك هي جوهر نفسك لا غير، إلا أنها تفتقر في فعل الإبصار إلى آلة مخصوصة هي العين والروح التي فيها. فتُسمى العينُ والروحُ باصرة مجازاً، لأنها آلة الإبصار. وهكذا جميع المحسوسات تدركها النفس وتحتاج في كل نوع إلى آلة أخرى. إنما المعقولات هي التي تدركها بذاتها لا بآلة.

وأما ما قيل في كيفية الإبصار—من أن صور المبصَرات تنطبع في الروح التي في العين، وتسري إلى مقدم الدماغ عند التقاء العصبتين فتشاهدها القوة هناك وتدركها—فقد ظهر بطلانه بما أورده صاحب المعتبر. فإنه إن[1] أمكن أن ينطبع في جزء من الدماغ أو في الروح التي فيه صورة، فتلك الصورة تكون لا محالة مساوية في القدر لذلك الجزء أو أصغر منه. ويستحيل أن تكون أكبر منه، فإن المقدار الأكبر لا ينطبق على المقدار الأصغر، وهذا لا يرتاب فيه عاقل. ونحن نرى أجساماً يكاد ترتفع النسبة بينها وبين الجزء المذكور من الدماغ في المقدار لعظمها وصغره. فكيف تنتقش صورها في الدماغ مع ما لها من الأطوال والعروض والمقادير! وكيف يسعها الدماغ ويحتملها!

A 119a فإن قالوا: إنما تنتقش فيه | صورة صغيرة محاكية لصورة الجسم العظيم المقدار مشابهة له في كل شيء إلا في المقدار، كإنسان العين مثلاً، فإنه
B 12b مثل صورة الإنسان في كل شيء إلا في القدر. قلنا: | فينبغي أن نرى الصورة

[1]B: فان

المنطبعة على مقدارها الذي لها لا أكبر[1] منها. فالجبل العظيم الذي يزيد ارتفاعه على ألفي ذراع لو انطبعت صورته في الدماغ فإنما تنطبع صغيرة بقدر الدماغ، فيجب أن نراها صغيرة كما انطبعت ولا ندرك ارتفاع الجبل وعظمه وقدره، فإنّ ذلك لم ينطبع. فالقوّة الباصرة إذا لم تشاهد إلا هذه الصور الصغار، فلا تدرك إلا مقاديرها، فمقدار الجسم الخارج كيف صار مدرَكاً، والقوّة لم تشاهدها؟ أبطريق الاستدلال بالأثر على المؤثِّر؟ ولو كان كذلك، لم يصر مقدار الجسم الخارج محسوساً، بل معلوماً من مشاهدة أثرِه. والعلم الحاصل بالشيء بطريق الاستدلال على وجوده غير الإحساس به.

فإن قالوا: الصورة المنطبعة في الدماغ، وإن كانت في الحقيقة صغيرة، إلا أنّا نراها على مقدار الجسم الذي تحاكيه الصورة كما نرى صور الأجسام ومقاديرها العظيمة في المرآة الصغيرة. فإنّ صورة الجبل العظيم تنطبع في المرآة مع صغر حجمها.[2] فالعين كمرآة صغيرة تنتقش فيها صور الأجسام العظيمة وتتأدّى منها إلى مقدّم الدماغ فتنتقش فيه، فندركها مثل ما ندرك في المرآة. فكما ندرك الأجسام العظيمة مع مقاديرها التي هي أضعاف مضاعفة لسطح المرآة | [A 119b] فيها، فكذلك ندركها في مرآة العين أو الدماغ.

قلنا: هذا هو منشأ الغلط ومزلة القدم. فمن الذي يقول بانطباع الصور | [B 13a] في المرآة! بل كما يستحيل انطباع صورة هي أعظم من الدماغ في جزء من الدماغ يستحيل أيضاً انطباع صورة هي أعظم من سطح المرآة في المرآة.

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[1] B: لها الاكبر [2] B: حجم المرآة

ولو انطبعت الصورة التي تحاذي بها المرآة فيها لكان ينبغي أن نرى تلك الصورة في سطح المرآة على أي وضع ونسبة يكون لنا مع المرآة. والوجود بخلافه. فإنا إذا وضعنا مرآة على الأرض، بحيث يكون سطحها على محاذاة جزء مخصوص من سقف البيت مثلاً، فلو انتقش صورة ذلك الجزء من السقف في سطح المرآة، فينبغي أن لا نرى إلا ذلك الجزء في سطحها. وليس كذلك. فإنا كلما بدلنا أوضاعنا مع المرآة وهي قارّة في مكانها تتبدل الصور[1] التي نراها، فتظهر عند كل وضعٍ صورةٌ أخرى. فإن كان سبب الانطباع هو المحاذاة، وهي غير مختلفة، فينبغي أن ينطبع فيها كل صورة تحاذيها وتظهر لنا جميع تلك الصور على أيّ وضع كنا، لأنا نرى سطح المرآة في كل حال وفي كل وضع، فيجب أن نرى النقش الحاصل فيه، كما لو نقشنا عليها صورة أخرى فإنا نراها أبداً عليها. ولا كذلك حال المرآة، فإنه قد ينظر في المرآة شخصان، يرى كل واحد منهما صورة صاحبه ولا يرى صورة نفسه. وعلى عكسه، فلو انطبعت الصورتان في المرآة لكان ينبغي أن تظهرا جميعاً لهما. فحين | لم يكن كذلك، عُلِم أنه لا ينطبع فيه الصورة البتة. A 120a

وأمّا أنه كيف نرى في المرآة ما لا ينطبع فيها، فنبيّن ذلك ونقول: إذا نظرنا | نحن في مرآة، وأوقعنا البصر على جزء مخصوص منها، أمكننا أن B 13b نتوهم خطاً مستقيماً يمتد من البصر إلى ذلك الجزء، وأمكن أن نتوهم خطاً آخر يخرج من ذلك الجزء إلى مركز العالم. فلنفعل ذلك، ونتوهم سطحاً بين الخطين. ونفرض ذلك السطح قاطعاً للمرآة، حتى يحدث على وجهها

[1] A: الصورة

خط مستقيم. ويكون الخط الممتد من البصر إلى سطح المرآة واقعاً على هذا الخط. فيحدث من التقاء الخطين زاويتان لا محالة في السطح المذكور الواقع[1] على وجه المرآة، إحداهما إلى ما يلي جهتنا، إن كان وجه المرآة على موازاة وجه الأرض، أو إلى ما يلي جهة الأرض، إن كانت[2] المرآة على وضع آخر. وتسمى هذه الزاوية زاوية الشعاع، والخط الممتد من العين إليها خط الشعاع. ونتوهم خطاً آخر يخرج من ملتقى الخطين في هذا السطح الواقع على وجه المرآة في الجهة الأخرى من زاوية الشعاع على وجه يحيط هو مع الخط المتوهَّم على سطح المرآة بزاوية أخرى مساوية لزاوية الشعاع، ونسميها زاوية الانعكاس، ويُسمى هذا الخط خط الانعكاس. وتختلف زاوية الشعاع لا محالة في الصغر والكبر باختلاف وضع المرآة مع الناظر فيها. وزاوية الانعكاس أبداً نفرضها مثل زاوية الشعاع.

وإذا عرفت هذا فنقول: كل شيء يقع على محاذاة خط الانعكاس | A 120b وعلى استقامته وفي صوب امتداده، فيراه الناظر في المرآة. وما لا يكون على ذلك الصوب، | B 14a فلا يراه البتة. فإذا كانت زاوية الشعاع حادة، فخط الانعكاس لا يقع على وجه الناظر، فلا يرى وجهه في المرآة. وإذا صارت زاوية الشعاع قائمة، فينطبق لا محالة خط الشعاع على خط الانعكاس، فيرتد خط الانعكاس إلى وجه الناظر، فيرى وجهه في المرآة. وهذا كله قد تبيّن في علم المناظر، ويدلك عليه التجربة والاعتبار إن أردتَ.

[1] B: – في السطح المذكور الواقع (marginal correction in A, probably added when A was collated with the holograph). [2] A B: كان

وهكذا ضوء الشمس وشعاعها. فإنها إذا وقَعَتْ على جسم صقيل كثيف[1] أو مرآة أو ماء صاف ينعكس منه فيقع على كل شيء يكون على محاذاة خط الانعكاس فيضيؤه. والمرايا الحرّاقة عُمِلت مقعرة الوجه على نسبة تنعكس من أطرافها أشعة الشمس الواقعة عليها إلى المركز، فيكثر الشعاع عند المركز، فيحترق الهواء الذي فيها ويحرق ما يحاذي بها.

فقد بُيّن بهذه الجملة أنّ صورة المرئي لم تنطبع في المرآة، وأن الذي يُظن أنه يُرى في المرآة ليس فيها البتة. بل الناظر في المرآة إنما يرى ذات الشيء وحقيقته، لا مثاله.

فحقيقة الرؤية شعور النفس بالمرئي بتوسط آلات مخصوصة، هي العين مع ما فيها من الروح والنور. وقد عرفت أن الروح جسم لطيف وأن النور عرض قائم به. وكما لا بد في الرؤية من أن يكون المرئي مستنيراً، إما في ذاته كالكواكب وكالنار، وإما بوقوع النور عليه من غيره، لا بد أيضاً من أن A 121a B 14b تكون العين، التي هي آلة الرؤية، ذات نور وضياء. فمن قلَّ || النور في عينه ضعف بصره، ومن كثر نور عينه قوي بصره. ويشهد لذلك الاعتبارات الطبية. فإنّ من ضعف بصره لقلة النور ونقصانه، لا لغلظه، كانت رؤيته من القرب أسهل وأيسر، بل لا يرى من البعد شيئاً، لأنّ النور القليل يتفرق في المسافة التي بينه وبين الشيء فلا ينتهي إليه. وأمّا إن كان الضعف للغلظ فقط، فيرى من البعد دون القرب، لأنه إذا تحرك في المسافة التي بينه وبين الشيء تحلل شيءٌ من غلظه بسبب الحركة، فيرتفع المانع من الرؤية. فحدة

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[1] B: كشيف

البصر أبداً بكثرة نور العين وبشدة صفاء الروح، حتى أنّ بعض الحيوانات التي كثر نور عينها تبصر في ظلمة الليل. فالإبصار يتوقف على وقوع نور البصر على الشيء المبصَر.

ولا نعني بوقوع نور البصر على الشيء انتقال نور العين إليه، بأن يخرج من العين ويسري في الفضاء الذي بين العين والشيء المرئي حتى يصل إليه ويقع عليه. فإنّ انتقال العرض من موضوعه محال. وكذا نور الشمس والنار، فإنه لا يخرج من قرص الشمس فيسري في فضاء العالم، ولا من جرم النار، فإنّ ذلك محال. ولكن معناه أنه يحدث في الهواء الذي بين العين وبين الشيء المرئي كيفية مشابهة لنور العين بسببه، كما يحدث في الهواء بسبب النور الذي في قرص الشمس هذا النور والضوء الذي نشاهده، وكما يحدث في هواء البيت في ظلمة الليل[1] نور بسبب ضوء السراج. فإذا تكيف الهواء | [B 15a] الذي بين العين والشيء المرئي بتلك الكيفية التي حدثت فيه بسبب نور العين، استعد لأن يصير آلة | [A 121b] للنفس في فعل الإبصار، فتبصر النفس الشيء باتصال هذه الآلة به. ولنتوسع في إطلاق اسم نور العين على هذه الكيفية الحادثة في الهواء، كما توسعنا في إطلاق اسم نور الشمس على الضوء الحادث في الهواء بسبب الشمس. فنقول: نور العين تارة يمتد من[2] العين على استقامة الخط الذي سميناه خط الشعاع حتى يصل إلى الشيء المرئي فتدركه النفس به. وتارة يصل على استقامته إلى جسم صقيل كثيف[3] أو مرآة

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[1] A: يحدث في ظلمة الليل في البيت [2] A: في [3] B: كشيف

فينعكس منه، ويمتد على خط الانعكاس إلى أن يصل إلى الشيء فتدركه النفس. فالمرآة سبب انعطاف النور وانعكاسه فقط. وأما سبب الرؤية في المرآة وغيره واحد، وهو وقوع نور البصر على الشيء المبصَر.

والذي يدل على اتصال نور العين بالمرئي وحدوثه في الهواء أن كل فعل للنفس يكون بآلة جسمانية، فلا بد فيه من اتصال الآلة بمحل الفعل. فإنه إن لم تتصل الآلة به، لم يكن هو أولى بوقوع الفعل فيه من محل آخَر. فتميزه عن غيره إنما كان بسبب اتصال الآلة به. وإذا لم يكن بدّ من الاتصال، فلا يخلو إما أن يتحرك المرئي أو مثاله إلى الآلة وهي العين، وقد بيّنا استحالته، وإما أن تتحرك الآلة إلى المرئي، ولا يمكن ذلك إلا بهذا الطريق الذي قلنا، وهو أن تحدث هذه الكيفية والقوة في الهواء | [B 15b] فتتصل بالمرئي.

ومما يدل على بطلان القول بالانطباع أنّا ندرك التفرقة في القرب والبعد بين ما يقرب منا ويبعد من الأشياء التي نراها. فلو كان المدرَك المشاهَد هي الصورة | [A 122a] المنطبعة في الدماغ، لا الشيء الخارج الذي هو في مكانه وحيزه الحقيقي، لكان ينبغي أن لا ندرك تفاوتاً في القرب والبعد، لأن الصور كلها إنما تنطبع في موضع واحد من داخل الدماغ، ليس بعضها أقرب إلينا وبعضها أبعد. والمسافة التي بيننا وبين الأشياء المرئية لا يعقل انطباعها في الدماغ البتة، بخلاف صور الأجسام فإنها مما يمكن نقشها على سطح الجسم. وأما المسافة فمما لا يقبل النقش على سطوح الأجسام. فمن المحال أن تنطبع صورتان في محل واحد، وينطبع مع أحداهما قربها من ذاتنا وينطبع مع الأخرى بُعدُها عنا. وإذا كنا لم ندرك إلا الصور الحاصلة في

دماغنا—ولا تفاوت بينها في ذواتنا من حيث القرب والبعد، إنما التفاوت في أمر خارج، وهو أنّ إحداهما حصلت بسبب أمر قريب منا والأخرى حصلت بسبب أمر بعيد—فينبغي أن يقتصر الإدراك على الحاضر الحاصل ويتقاصر عما هو خارج عنه. كمن حضر عنده شخصان، أحدهما من موضع قريب والآخر من مكان بعيد، فإنه يدركهما لكونهما حاضرين عنده، ولا يدرك مكانهما الذي كانا فيه قبل الحضور، ولا أنّ أحدهما حضر عنده من مسافة قريبة، والآخر من | (B 16a) مكان بعيد. والوجود في الرؤية بخلافه. فعُلم أنّا إذا رأينا الشيء، فإنما نراه في مكانه الذي هو فيه، وندرك المسافة التي بيننا وبينه، ولا نشك في أنّا نرى ذاته الحقيقي في مكانه الحقيقي، لا مثاله في دماغنا. هذا مما لا يرتاب فيه عاقل. | (A 122b)

وأيضاً لو كنا نرى الأشياء كلها في دماغنا، لكان أولى الأشياء بأن نراها هو جوهر دماغنا، على ما قرره صاحب المعتبر. فإنّ القوة الباصرة لو كانت في العين أو الدماغ، وهي تشاهد صورة الشيء الخارج عنه فتدركها، فما بالها لا تدرك الجسم الذي هو محلها؟ وما المانع لها من الإدراك، وهي كما تلاقي الصورة الحاصلة في محلها تلاقي ذات المحل؟ فعُلم أنّ القول بالانطباع مما لا طائل تحته، وأنّ القوة الباصرة ليست غير جوهر النفس الناطقة، وأنّ إبصارها هو بوصول آلتها التي هي النور الممتد من العين إلى الشيء المبصَر.

فإن قيل: الدليل على الانطباع أنّ الأحول يرى الشيء الواحد شيئين، لأنّ عصبتي عينيه لم تلتقيا في دماغه، بل انحرفت إحداهما عن الأخرى. فالصورة المنطبعة في إحدى العينين إذا سرت إلى مقدم الدماغ لا تنطبق

على الصورة التي سرت إليه من العين الأخرى حتى صارتا صورة واحدة، فتدركها القوة. بل كل واحدة[1] من الصورتين ترتسم في جزء آخر من الدماغ. فالقوة الباصرة تشاهد هناك صورتين وترى شيئين. فإن لم يكن كذلك، فما باله يرى الواحد | اثنين؟ B 16b

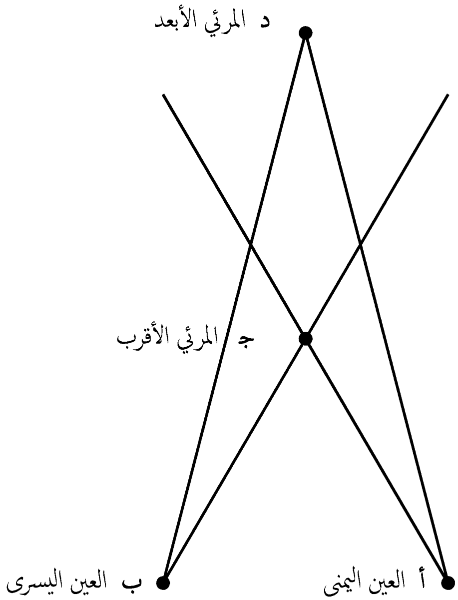
قلنا: هذا باطل. فإنا إذا تكلفنا الحوَل ونظرنا إلى الشيء نظرَ الأحولِ، نراه أيضاً اثنين كما يراه الأحول. ونحن نعلم أنّ عند تكلف الحول لا يبطل تركيب العصبتين في داخل الدماغ. فإنّ التقاءهما هناك ليس على وجه يبطل ويعود متى شئنا. ويدل عليه أنه لو كان في مقابلتنا على صوب واحد شيئان، أحدهما | على مسافة عشرة أذرع فما فوقها، والثاني على مسافة ذراع أو A 123a ذراعين مثلاً، وكان الثاني لا يحجب الأول عن بصرنا، ثم نظرنا إلى الشيء الأقرب إلينا وجمعنا البصرَ عليه وقصدناه بالنظر، كأنا لا ننظر إلى غيره، فإنا نراه واحداً كما هو، ونرى في هذه الحالة بعينها الشيء الأبعد شيئين اثنين. وعلى عكسه، لو نظرنا إلى الشيء الأبعد وجمعنا البصر عليه، نراه واحداً كما هو، ونرى الشيء الأقرب في تلك الحالة بعينها شيئين اثنين. وجربه من نفسك لتقف عليه. فلو كان السبب في رؤية الشيء الواحد شيئين ما ذكروه من انحراف العصبتين[2] وتباعدهما، لما تُصوِّر أن نرى في حالة واحدة أحد الشيئين واحداً والثاني اثنين. إذ كيف يكون تركيب العصبتين باقياً بحاله وباطلاً مرتفعاً في حالة واحدة! فليس السبب ما تخيلوه. وإنما[3] السبب في

[1]B: واحد [2]A: عصبتين [3]B: وإن

ذلك أنّ النور الممتد من كل عين على شكل مخروط رأسه عند العين وقاعدته عند ما يقع عليها من الأجسام المرئية، وقوة هذا النور وسلطنته | (B 17a) في سهم المخروط الذي سميناه خط الشعاع. وخطا الشعاع الممتدان من العينين يلتقيان عند الشيء المبصَر، فيتحدان هناك. وجمع البصر على الشيء هو إيقاع سهمي المخروط عليه. فإذا جمعنا البصر على الشيء الأقرب فقد وقع عليه السهمان، وفي تلك الحالة يقع من كل مخروط طرفه الوحشي على الشيء الأبعد دون طرفه الإنسي. وأعني بالطرف الإنسي الطرف الذي يلي المخروط الآخَر، و بالطرف الوحشي ما يقابله. فإذا وقع الطرف الوحشي من مخروط العين اليمنى على الشيء الأبعد، ووقع سهم المخروط على الشيء الأقرب، فنرى بتلك العين الشيء الأبعد من الشيء الأقرب فيما يلي جهة يميننا. وإذا وقع الطرف الوحشي من مخروط العين اليسرى على الشيء الأبعد، ووقع السهم على الشيء الأقرب، فنرى بتلك العين الشيء الأبعد من الشيء الأقرب فيما يلي جهة يسارنا. فنرى الأبعد بإحدى العينين على يمين الأقرب وبالأخرى على يساره، فنراه شيئين، وبينهما الشيء الأقرب. وأما إذا جمعنا البصر على الشيء الأبعد، فالسهمان يلتقيان هناك. ويقع من كل مخروط طرفه الإنسي على الشيء الأقرب. والخطان الممتدان من العينين إلى الشيء الأقرب يتقاطعان وينفذان كل واحد على استقامته على جنبتي الشيء الأبعد. فالذي يخرج من العين | (A 123b) اليمنى يمر على الجانب الأيسر من الشيء الأبعد. والذي | (B 17b) يخرج من العين اليسرى يمر على الجانب الأيمن منه. فنرى بالعين اليمنى الشيء الأقرب على يسار الأبعد، وبالعين اليسرى على يمينه،

فنراه شيئين. ونرى الأبعد بسبب التقاء السهمين عليه شيئاً واحداً، كما كنا نرى الأقرب بسبب التقاء السهمين عليه قبل ذلك شيئاً واحداً.

وهكذا حال الأحول. فإنّ سهمي مخروطي عينيه لا يلتقيان على شيء واحد، بل يقع كل واحد على ما يليه من قاعدة الأنف، أو يلتقيان بين العينين في الهواء الذي يقرب منه جداً. وإنهم أبداً إنما يرون الأشياء بطرف المخروط لا بوقوع السهمين عليها. ولو أمكنهم أن يتكلفوا التقاءهما على شيء واحد لرأوا ذلك الشيء واحداً كما هو. فهذا هو السبب في رؤية الشيء الواحد شيئين[1] اثنين، لا ما تخيلوه من انطباع صورتين. ومن هذه الصورة يُستعان على تصور ما ذكرناه.[2] || A 124a B 18a



إذا فرضنا خطي أد بد سهمين، كان أج بج من إنسيتي طرفي المخروطين. وإذا فرضنا أج بج سهمين، كان أد بد من وحشيتي طرفي المخروطين.

[1]B: – شيئين [2]Diagram: A (123b), B (17b).

يبقى إشكال على أصل الكلام، وهو ما أشار إليه بقوله، "أليس قد تبصر القطر النازل خطاً مستقيماً والنقطة الدائرة بسرعة خطاً مستديراً، كله على سبيل المشاهدة، لا على سبيل تخيل أو تذكر؟ وأنت تعلم أنّ البصر إنما ترتسم فيه صورة المقابل، والمقابل النازل أو المستدير كالنقطة لا كالخط. فقد بقي إذن في بعض قواك هيئة ما ارتسم أولاً، واتصل[1] بها هيئة الإبصار الحاضر. فعندك قوةٌ قِبَلَ البصر إليها يؤدَّى البصرُ كالمشاهدة، وعندها تجتمع المحسوسات".[2]

ووجه الإشكال أنّ النور الذي هو آلة النفس في الإبصار يصادف الشيء المرئي كما هو، ولا يخفى أنّ النقطة بالحركة لم تصر خطاً من حيث الحقيقة بل بقيت نقطة كما كانت، فما بال النفس تراها[3] خطاً إن كان المرئي ذاتها الحقيقية لا الأثر الحاصل منها؟ إلا أنّا نقول: إنّ هذا إن دل على ارتسام الصورة فإنما يدل عليه في الجملة، أمّا لا يدل على ارتسامها في العين والدماغ. فهلاّ قلتم إنها ترتسم في الهواء المنور بنور العين المماس للشيء[4] المرئي! ولو جاز أن ترتسم في الدماغ والروح الذي فيه لجاز أن ترتسم في الهواء المتكيف بهذه الكيفية المخصوصة. فأي استحالة فيه؟ وفيما تقدم من الكلام دلالة قاطعة على امتناع الارتسام في العين والدماغ، وليس فيه ما يدل على امتناعه في الجملة.| B 18b

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[1]A: وارتسم [2]*Ishārāt*, 2, 374–376. [3]B: لا يراها [4]B: الشيء

وما أوردناه الآن من كلام الإشارات، إن كان يدل على الارتسام والانطباع، فوجب أن نجمع بينهما ونقول: إنّ صورة المرئي على ما هو عليه من القدر والشكل ترتسم في آلة الإبصار، | لكن في طرفها عند اتصالها A 124[b] بالمرئي وملاقاتها إياه بالمماسة. فهنالك تنفعل الآلة ويحصل في محل التماس منها هيئة مشابهة للمرئي، كأنها سطح مشترك بين الآلة وبين المرئي، وإن لم يكن مشتركاً في الحقيقة، فتدركها النفس. فإن دعت الضرورة إلى القول بالانطباع ولم يكن بدّ منه، فهو على هذا الوجه—ولا دليل على امتناعه— أولى. بل لا يمكن إلا كذلك، لما سبق ذكره مما دل على استحالة الانطباع في العين والدماغ.

وعلى هذا لا يلزمنا أن نقول إنّ المبصَر المدرَك هو هذه الهيئة وهذا الأثر لا غير، بل الأثر والمؤثر جميعاً. فالأثر ينطبق على المؤثر ويلتصق به، فيصير مع المؤثر كشيء واحد، فندرك ذلك الواحد. ولا نميّز بينهما إلا عند مفارقة المؤثر الأثر بسرعة، كما في الصورة المذكورة، فهناك يبقى الأثر حيث كان لحظة لطيفة بعد تحول المؤثر وانتقاله إلى حيز آخَر، فندركهما جميعاً في حيزين. وأما قبل فرض الحركة، فلا نميّز بينهما لاتحادهما بحكم الاتصال.

وهكذا نقول في الحواس الأخر. فإنّ بشرة اليد تنفعل عن الجسم الحار الملموس، ويحصل فيها حرارة مشابهة لحرارة الملموس، فندركها في سطح | B 19[a] الكف وسطح الجسم الملموس، ولا نميّز بينهما بحكم الوحدة الحاصلة بسبب الاتصال. ولهذا لا ندرك من الملموس إلا كيفية مخالفة لكيفية البشرة. حتى لو غمسنا الإصبع في ماء فاتر معتدل بين الحرارة والبرودة اعتدالاً

A 125a شبيهاً باعتدال حرارة الإصبع، | فإنّا لا ندرك حرارته ولا نحس به. إذ لا يحدث في ظاهر الإصبع بسبب الانغماس فيه كيفية لم تكن موجودة فيه، ولم تنفعل آلة الإدراك، فلا يحصل الإدراك. وأما إذا كان الماء أحر من الإصبع أو أبرد منه، فتحدث فيه الكيفية المشابهة لكيفية الماء، وتنفعل الآلة، فيحصل الإدراك.

وهكذا نقول في السمع. فإنّ الصوت الذي هو كيفية حادثة في الهواء ينتهي إلى العصبة المفروشة على صماخ الأذن، وهي مع الروح المنبثّ فيها آلة النفس في إدراك تلك الكيفية. فإذا وصلت الكيفية إلى العصبة أدركتها النفس بتمامها، أي أدركت جملة الصوت الحادث في الهواء الذي بين السمع وبين الجسم المصوت، ولم يقتصر إدراكها على القدر الذي حدث في العصبة، لاتحاد الجملة واتصال بعضها بالبعض، حتى تدرك مع الصوت جهته التي حدث فيها من الجسم المصوت وتدرك قرب المصوت وبعده. ولو اقتصر الإدراك على ما حدث في العصبة المفروشة من الكيفية لَمَا أحسسنا بالجهة والقرب والبعد، إذ ليس هناك قرب وبعد وجهة. ونحن | لا نشك في B 19b أنّا نسمع الأصوات حيث هي وفي مواضعها التي فيها المصوتات ونفرق بين القريب منها والبعيد. كما أنّا نبصر الألوان حيث هي وفي مواضعها التي هي فيها، ونفرق بين القريب والبعيد منها. وهكذا القول في باقي الحواس الظاهرة.

وقد تبين من مجموع ما ذكرنا بطلان القول بانطباع الصور في العين والدماغ.

وأمّا المذهب الثاني | [A 125b] في كيفية الرؤية، وهو حدوث القوة التي سميناها نور العين في الهواء واتصالها بالمرئي، وإن لم تقم عليه حجة يُعتد بها، فهو من جملة الممكنات، ولا دليل على امتناعه واستحالته. ومهما علمنا قطعاً أنّ الإدراكات كلها إنما هي[1] للنفس، وليس وراءها قوة مدركة في البدن، وأنّ إدراكها للمحسوسات إنما يكون بتوسط الآلات، وأنّ الآلة لا بد وأن تتصل بمحل الفعل، وأنّ الاتصال إما أن يكون بانتقال المحل إلى الآلة أو بحركة الآلة إليه، وأنّ انتقال المبصَرات إلى آلة الإبصار محال، فيلزم من ذلك أنّ آلة الإبصار تتصل بالشيء المبصَر حيث كان المبصَر من غير أن ينتقل من موضعه إلى آلة ومن غير أن يرتسم مثاله في داخل البدن في الآلة. ولا يمكن ذلك إلا بما ذكرنا من الطريق، وهو حدوث القوة التي سميناها نور العين في الجسم الذي بين الشيء المبصَر وبين العين، فتكون تلك القوة آلة النفس في الإدراك. فهذا تمام البحث عن الحواس الظاهرة. | [B 20a]

وأما الحواس الباطنة، فقد قالوا إنها خمس. أولاها الحس المشترك، ويسمونه بنطاسيا. وثانيتها الخيال، وتسمى مصورة. وثالثتها المفكرة، وتسمى باعتبار متخيلة. ورابعتها الوهم. وخامستها الذاكرة، وتسمى حافظة. فالحس المشترك قوة في مقدم الدماغ تجتمع عندها المحسوسات فتدركها. والخيال قوة تُحفظ مُثُلُ المحسوسات بعد الغيبوبة مجتمعة فيها. والوهم قوة تدرك من المحسوسات الجزئية معاني | [A 126a] جزئية غير محسوسة ولا متأدية من طريق الحواس. والذاكرة قوة تحفظ هذه المعاني، فإنّ الحفظ غير الإدراك، فله

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[1] B: – هي

قوة أخرى. والمفكرة قوة متصرفة في هذه المعاني وتلك الصورة مفتشة عنها مركبة بعضها ببعض أو مفصلة.

وذكر في الإشارات تفاصيل هذه القوى وشرحها في الإشارة التي أولها، "لعلك تنزع[1] الآن إلى أن نشرح لك أمر القوى الدراكة من باطن أدنى شرح، وأن نقدم شرح أمر المناسِبة للحس أولاً. فاسمع".[2]

فنقول: أمّا اجتماع المحسوسات عند قوة في مقدم الدماغ، فقد تبين امتناعه بما تقدم ذكره، ويزيدك استبصاراً به تأملك حال الملموسات والمذوقات. فإنّ طعوم المطعومات عند تناولها إنما نجدها في الفم وسطح اللسان والحلق فقط. وكما لا يرتاب أحد في أنه لا يجد حلاوة الشيء الحلو عند التناول في عقب قدميه وأصابع رجليه مثلاً، لا يرتاب أيضاً أنه | لا B 20b يجدها في دماغه. ولو حصلت الحلاوة في الدماغ بطريق التأدية إليه من اللسان والحلق، حتى صارت محسوسة هناك، لعلمنا وجودها فيه. إذ كيف تصير الحلاوة محسوسة لنا في عضو منا، ولم نشعر بكونها في ذلك العضو؟ ولو جاز ذلك، لجاز أن يقال إنّ الحلاوة تحدث في أصابع القدمين وتصير محسوسة لنا هناك، ونحن لا نشعر بأنها فيها. وهذا من أقوى المحالات.

A 126b وهكذا حال الملموسات. فإنا إذا لمسنا الشيء الحار باليد، نعلم | قطعاً ويقيناً بأنّا لا ندرك الحرارة في أبصارها وأسماعنا وقلبنا ودماغنا ولا في عضو آخر من أعضاء بدننا سوى اليد. نعم، لو قيل إنّ في الدماغ قوة واحدة تدرك

[1]B: – تنزع [2]*Ishārāt*, 2, 373–374.

جميع هذه المحسوسات بآلات مختلفة، كل واحد منها في مكانه وموضعه الذي هو فيه عند اتصال الآلة به، لا في داخل الدماغ، كان ذلك حكماً في حيز الإمكان. أما القول باجتماع المحسوسات عند القوة فهو مكابرة العقل.

ولو قيل أيضاً إنّ مُثُل المحسوسات تجتمع عند قوة في الدماغ، لا المحسوسات، كان ذلك كلاماً آخر. وقد ذكروا ذلك، وزعموا أنّ تلك القوة التي تجتمع عندها مُثُل المحسوسات بعد الغيبوبة قوة أخرى غير الحس المشترك. فالحس المشترك يشاهد المحسوس لا مثال المحسوس، والخيال يشاهد مثال المحسوس لا حقيقة المحسوس. ثم لا حجة لهم على ذلك سوى أنهم قالوا بأنّا نحكم بأنّ هذا اللون الجزئي غير هذا الطعم | [B 21a] الجزئي، وأنّ لصاحب هذا اللون هذا الطعم، والقاضي بهذين الأمرين يحتاج أن يحضره المقضي عليهما جميعاً. إلا أنّا نقول: إنّ القاضي بهذين الأمرين هو حقيقة ذاتك وجوهر نفسك الذي يدرك جميع هذه المحسوسات، كل واحد بآلة مخصوصة تتصل به في محله وموضعه الذي هو فيه.

وأيضاً، فإنّ الحس المشترك عندهم إنما يدرك المحسوس الحاضر، ولا يدرك مثاله بعد غيبته. وإنما المدرِك للمثال قوة غير الحافظة له، إذ الحفظ غير الإدراك. كما قالوا في الوهم إنه قوة تدرك المعاني | [A 127a] الجزئية، والذاكرة قوة تحفظ كل المعاني، فيلزمهم أن يقولوا بمثل ذلك في الصور وأن يثبتوا قوة أخرى تدرك الصور بعد غيبة المحسوسات إن كانت قوة الخيال حافظة لها، أو تحفظ الصور إن كانت [قوة] الخيال مدركة. فيلزمهم أن يثبتوا قوة سادسة لا محالة.

ثم حفظ صور المحسوسات كلها وبقاؤها بالفعل في قوة واحدة في جزء من الدماغ مما يأباه العقل. فإنّ هذه النقوش والصور إن كانت كلها في محل واحد، فيقع البعض فوق البعض بالضرورة، فيلزم أن يختلط الكل، حتى يكون الحاصل فيه نقشاً غير مطابق لشيء مما في الخارج. كما لو نقشنا على سطح مثلاً نقشاً، ثم نقشنا فوقه نقشاً آخر، ثم صورنا عليه صورة أخرى، هكذا إلى حد يكاد لا يتناهى، فإنه تتشوش النقوش ولم يتميز بعضها عن بعض، بل تحصل على السطح هيئة مشوشة غير منظومة.

B 21b وإن انتقش كل واحد من الصور | في محل آخر، فيكون الجزء من الدماغ الذي فيه القوة الحافظة للصور منقسماً إلى أقسام كثيرة يكاد لا يتناهى عددها، وينتهي كل قسم في صغر الحجم إلى حد يكاد لا يدرَك بالحس، ثم تنتقش صورة السماء في واحد منها وصورة الأرض في واحد، وهكذا صور الموجودات كلها. وهذا مما لا يرتاب العاقل في بطلانه وامتناعه.

ثم ليس بعض الأجزاء ببعض الصور أولى من غيره. فالجزء الذي انتقش فيه صورة السماء مثلاً ليس أولى بها من الجزء[1] الذي انتقش فيه صورة الأرض. فلم اختص ذلك الجزء من بين سائر الأجزاء بتلك الصورة؟ وهل

A 127b هذا إلا تحكم محض! |

ثم إن تُصور هذا كله، فالقوة المدركة لهذه الصور، عندما أردنا أن نتذكر شيئاً منها، تنتقل من محلها وموضوعها إلى المحل الذي انتقش فيه الصورة

[1] B: – الجزء

حتى تلاقيها فتدركها، أو الصورة تنتقل من محلها إلى المحل الذي فيه[1] القوة المدركة؟ ويلزم من التقديرين انتقال العرض من محل إلى محل، ولا تخفى استحالته. وإن لم يكن انتقال، فإن كانت القوة المدركة والصورة المنقوشة كلاهما أبداً[2] في محل واحد، فهلا كان الإدراك حاصلاً بالفعل دائماً لحصول الملاقاة دائماً؟ وأي شيء حدث عند تجدد الإدراك؟ وإن كانا في محلين وفي جزئين متغايرين من الدماغ، فكيف يدركها ولا ملاقاة بينهما؟

ثم حفظ الصور المنقوشة وبقاء مُثُل المحسوسات مما يُفهم معناه في الجملة. أما بقاء المعاني وحفظها، غير مفسر بكونها معلوماً | بالفعل، فمما لا يفهم B 22a له معنى. فإنا إذا علمنا مثلاً أنّ زيداً عدو لعمرو، فعداوته له أمر محقَّق، وهو وصف قائم به. وإحاطة علمنا بها أيضاً أمر آخر. وبقاء هذا العلم بالفعل أيضاً مفهوم. أمّا حصول مثال تلك العداوة في دماغنا وبقاؤه فيه مع ذهولنا وانقطاع علمنا بالفعل عنها، فمما لا يعقل له معنى البتة.

ثم الذي يدفع[3] القول بإثبات هذه القوى وإدراكاتها أنّا إذا تخيلنا صورة أو تذكرنا معنى، فإمّا أن يحصل لجوهر نفسنا التي هي حقيقتنا شعور وعلم به، أو لم يحصل. ومحال أن لا يحصل، فإنّ أحداً لا يشك في أنه العالم بما يتخيله أو يتذكره. وإن | حصل العلم به، فإمّا أن يكون علمنا به هو عين إدراك A 128a القوة أو غيره. ومحال أن يكون عينه، فإنّ تغاير المدرِك يوجب تغاير الإدراك

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[1]A: فيها   [2]B: – أبدا   [3]B: دفع

بالضرورة. فإذن شعورنا وإدراكنا بما نتخيل ونتوهم غير شعور هذه القوى به. فشعور هذه القوى يقع فضلاً فيما يرجع إلى شعورنا به. فإنّا إذا علمنا مثلاً بأنّ زيداً صديق عمرو أو عدوه، فالمدرِك لهذه الصداقة إن لم يكن إلا قوة في دماغنا، وهي غير جوهر نفسنا، فجوهر نفسنا غير عالمة بها. نعم، ربما يَعلم بأنّ قوة من جملة قوى بدنها أدركت تلك الصداقة، ولكن العلم بأنّ قوة أخرى غير ذاتها علمت شيئاً لم يكن علماً بذلك الشيء. وإن أدركت النفس أيضاً تلك الصداقة، فلا شك أنّ إدراكها غير إدراك القوة لها. ونحن إنما نثبتها ونقضي بوجودها لشعور النفس بها، لا لشعور قوة الوهم. فلا ضرورة | B 22b إذن إلى إثبات قوة مدركة وراء النفس. نعم، تفتقر النفس في هذه الإدراكات إلى آلات مخصوصة هي أجزاء الدماغ مع الأرواح التي فيها، فيكون كل جزء منه آلة لنوع آخَر من الإدراك، كما قررناه في الحواس الظاهرة. فإذاً[1] لا إدراك إلا للنفس، ولا مدرِك إلا النفس.

فإن قيل: النفس البشرية لا تدرك الأجسام والأمور المحسوسة، لِما عُلِم أنها ليست منقسمة ولا ذات وضع، وكل جسم فمنقسم بالقوة وله وضع لا محالة، وقد عُلِم أنّ الإدراك بالمقارنة والملاقاة أو هو نفس المقارنة، وما لا ينقسم البتة بوجه من الوجوه | A 128b لا يقارِن المنقسم، فإنّ ما يقارن المنقسم منقسم لا محالة. ولأنّ ما لا وضع له لا يقارن ما له وضع—إذ يلزم منه أحد أمرين، إمّا حصول الوضع لما لا وضع له، أو انعدام الوضع لما له وضع، وكلاهما محال—فإذن النفس لا تدرك المحسوسات والمتخيَّلات. فدعت

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[1] A: إذ

الضرورة إلى إثبات قوى جسمانية مدرِكة لها، وهذه القوى آلات النفس تدرِك بوسائطها مدرَكاتها إدراكاً عقلياً لعلاقة عقلية بين النفس وبين هذه القوى.

قلنا: دعواكم أنّ النفس البشرية لا تدرك الأجسام والأمور المحسوسة، وإن كان مشهوراً منقولاً من المتقدمين والمتأخرين، فليس بأوّلي لا يفتقر إلى البرهان. فما البرهان عليه؟

وقولكم بأنّ النفس ليست منقسمة ولا ذات وضع. قلنا: هذا، وإن كان للبحث فيه مجال، لكن الآن لا نتعرض له ولا ننازع فيه، وإنما ننازع في القضية الأخرى، | B 23[a] وهي أنّ الإدراك بالمقارنة والملاقاة. وقد بيّنا فيما تقدم أنه ليس كذلك. نعم، تفتقر بعض الإدراكات إلى مقارنة بين آلة الإدراك وبين الشيء المدرَك. أمّا المقارنة بين المدرِك والمدرَك، فلا.

ويدل على أنّ النفس تدرك الأمور المحسوسة الجسمانية أنّ مدرَكات هذه القوى لا تخلو إمّا أن تصير مدرَكة للنفس أو لا تصير. فإن لم تصر مدرَكة لها، فلا شعور لنا إذن بما نسمع ونبصر ونتخيل ونتوهم. ولا يخفى بطلان هذا القول. وإن صارت مدرَكة، فقد أدركت النفس أموراً جسمانية محسوسة. ثم لا بد وأن تدرك النفس هذه القوى | A 129[a] المدرِكة حتى تدرك مدرَكاتها فيها. وهذه القوى أيضاً أمور جسمانية موجودة في موضوعاتها كسائر الأعراض.

وقولكم إنّ النفس تدركها إدراكاً عقلياً، كلام مبهم. فإن أردتم به أنّ النفس إذا أدركت هذه القوى أو مدرَكاتها فقد أدركت أموراً عقلية غير

جسمانية، فليس كذلك. وهذا[1] لا خفاء به. وإن أردتم أنها أدركتها من حيث هي قوى، وهي من هذه الجهة أمور كلية عقلية، كمن يدرِك من شخص زيد مثلاً حقيقة الإنسانية، فهو باطل أيضاً. فإنها إذا لم تدرك هذه القوى المعينة الشخصية من حيث هي هذه المعينات، لم تدرك ما ارتسم فيها من مدرَكاتها الشخصية، فيلزم أن لا يكون لنا شعور بما نحس ونتخيل. لكنا لا نشك في أنّا ندرك جميع ذلك، فقد أدركت النفس هذه المحسوسات والمتخيّلات، وأدركت هذه | القوى الجسمانية، بل أدركت جملة بدنها الخاص بها. B 23b

فقد يُتخيل من مجموع ما ذكرنا أنّ للنفس شعوراً بهذه الجزئيات المحسوسة الجسمانية، وأنه لا يكفي في شعورها بها إدراكات القوى الجسمانية لها، بل لا بد وأن يكون لها إدراك آخَر.[2] فتكون إدراكات هذه القوى فضلاً فيما يرجع إلى إدراكها. فإنها لا تنتفع بإدراك هذه القوى، وإنما تنتفع بموضوعاتها التي هي آلات تستعملها في أفعالها. وإذا لم يتوقف إدراك النفس على هذه القوى وإدراكاتها، ولا دعت ضرورة أخرى إلى إثباتها، ولا حجة قامت عليها، فلا يُقضى[3] بثبوتها. فهذا ما انتهى | إليه البحث والنظر عن حال الإدراكات. والله أعلم. A 129b

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[1]B: وهذه [2]B: – آخر [3]A: يقتضى

المسألة الخامسة:

[في أنّ النفس الناطقة غير منطبعة في البدن]

قال الشيخ[1] رحمه الله: "إن اشتهيت الآن أن يتضح لك أنّ المعنى المعقول لا يرتسم في منقسم ولا في ذي وضع، فاسمع! إنك تعلم أنّ الشيء غير المنقسم قد تقارنه أشياء كثيرة لا يجب له أن يصير منقسماً[2] في الوضع. وذلك إذا لم تكن كثرتها كثرة ما ينقسم في الوضع، كأجزاء البلقة. لكن الشيء المنقسم إلى كثرة مختلفة الوضع لا يجوز أن يقارنه شيء غير منقسم. وفي المعقولات معان غير منقسمة لا محالة، وإلا لكانت المعقولات إنما تلتئم من مبادئ لها غير متناهية بالفعل. ومع ذلك فإنه لا بد في كل كثرة متناهية[3] أو غير متناهية عن واحد بالفعل. وإذا كان في المعقولات ما هو واحد[4] | [B 24a] ويُعقل من حيث هو واحد،[5] فإنما يُعقل من حيث[6] لا ينقسم، فإذن لا يرتسم فيما ينقسم في الوضع، وكل[7] جسم وكل قوة جسم منقسم".[8]

قلت: الغرض من هذا الكلام أن يبين أنّ النفس الناطقة البشرية ليست بجسم ولا منطبعة في جسم، بل هي مفارقة للأجسام قائمة بذاتها غير منقسمة ولا ذات وضع. ولعمري إنّ هذه قضية مشهورة اتفق عليها الأولون والآخرون وتطابقت عليها الشرائع الحقة وانكشفت بالوحي ونور النبوة

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[1]B: + أبو علي [2]*Ishārāt*: لها أن تصير منقسمة [3]*Ishārāt*: + كانت [4]*Ishārāt*: + بالفعل [5]B: – ويعقل من حيث هو واحد [6]*Ishārāt*: + هو [7]A: فكل [8]*Ishārāt*, 2, 404–408.

للأنبياء والرسل صلوات الله عليهم أجمعين، إذ أخبروا عن بقائها بعد الموت، والعرض لا يبقى بعد فناء الموضوع،[1] فقبلناها منهم إيماناً بالغيب وتصديقاً A 130a واعتقاداً | لما تعبدنا به على لسانهم عليهم السلام.

والذين يفحصون عن حقائق الأمور ويبتغون الترقي من مقام التقليد إلى عالم الكشف والاستبصار تمسكوا بأذيال الحجج. إلا أنّ ما نقل إلينا منها في كتبهم بعضها إقناعية لا تشفي الغليل ولا تكشف الغمة، وبعضها أقوى من ذلك، غير أنها مبنية على مقدمة مشهورة أخذوها مسلمة، وعند البحث يتبين أنها غير صادقة.

وهذا الذي نقلناه الآن من كلام الإشارات من هذا القبيل. فإنّ حاصله يرجع إلى أنّ في المعقولات معاني غير منقسمة، بل هي في ذاتها واحدة وتُعقل من حيث هي واحدة. وأمثال هذه يستحيل أن يرتسم فيما هو منقسم في الوضع. وكل جسم أو قوة جسمانية فهي منقسمة في الوضع، فيستحيل B 24b إذن أن يرتسم | فيها هذه المعقولات.

وهذا كله مسلم لا نزاع فيه. إلا أنّ البرهان على المطلوب لا يتم إلا بمقدمة أخرى، وهي أنّ إدراك الشيء لا يحصل إلا بارتسامه في القوة المدرِكة أو في موضوعها، أو هو حقيقة الارتسام. وهذه المقدمة غير صادقة، فإنّا قد بيّنا أنّ حقيقة الإدراك غير الارتسام والانطباع، وأنها لا تتوقف على الارتسام. وإذا كان الإدراك أمراً وراء الارتسام، فلم لا يجوز أن تكون النفس قوة منطبعة في الدماغ تدرك حقائق الأشياء من غير أن يرتسم فيها أو

[1] A: الموضع

في الدماغ الذي هو موضوعها شيء منها، فتدرك المحسوسات الظاهرة منها والباطنة بآلات مخصوصة، وتدرك المعقولات | وحقائق الأشياء إما بذاتها (A 130b) وإما باستعانة من موضوعها؟

ومما يدل أيضاً على أنّ الإدراك غير الارتسام أنّا كما ندرك المعقولات ندرك المحسوسات. وهذا مما لا ريب فيه، كما سبق ذكره. وكما لا يمكن أن يقارن المعقول الذي هو غير منقسم قوة جسمانية منقسمة في الوضع، لا يمكن أيضاً أن يقارن المحسوس المنقسم في الوضع جوهراً قائماً بذاته غير منقسم في الوضع. فإن كانت[1] حقيقة الإدراك هو المقارنة، أو لا تحصل إلا بالمقارنة، فيلزم منه أنّا لا ندرك المحسوسات أصلاً إن كانت النفس غير منطبعة في البدن، أو لا ندرك المعقولات البتة إن كانت النفس منطبعة في البدن. لكنّا لا نشك في أنّا ندركهما جميعاً. فليس حقيقة الإدراك هو الاقتران | والارتسام (B 25a)، وليس يتوقف أيضاً حصول الإدراك عليه، بل هو أمر وراء ذلك.

وإذا كان كذلك، فلا ينتظم هذا البرهان، ولا الذي أشار إليه في النمط السابع بقوله، "لو كانت القوة العقلية منطبعة في جسم[2] من قلب أو دماغ لكانت دائمة التعقل له، أو كانت لا تتعقله البتة، لأنها إنما تتعقل بحصول صورة المتعقَّل لها"، إلى آخر الفصل.[3] فإنّ حصول صورة المتعقَّل وارتسامها وانطباعها فيها ومقارنتها لها كلها عبارات عن معنى واحد، كما لا يخفى. فقد

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[1] A B: كان [2] B: الجسم [3] *Ishārāt*, 3, 253–260.

أُخذت هذه المقدمة مسلمة في هذه البراهين وأخواتها، وهي غير صادقة كما بيّنا.

وأمّا ما أشار إليه في أول[1] النمط السابع بقوله، "إنّ النفس الناطقة تعقل بذاتها، كما علمتَ، | لا بآلتها. ولو عقلت بآلتها، لكان لا يعرض للآلة كلال A 131a البتة إلا ويعرض للقوة كلال"، إلى آخره،[2] وبقوله، "إنّ القوى القائمة بالأبدان يكلّها تكرُّر الأفاعيل"، إلى آخره،[3] وبقوله، "ما كان فِعله بآلة، ولم يكن له فعل خاص، لم يكن له فعل في الآلة"، إلى آخره،[4] فإنها من الإقناعيات التي لا تفيد اليقين، كما لا يخفى عليك.

فإن قيل: العلم له تعلق بالعالم لا محالة، فإنه[5] صفته القائمة به، والصفة تستدعي موصوفاً تقوم به وتحل فيه، فللعلوم العقلية منا محل تحل فيه لا محالة. فذلك المحل إن كان جسماً أو جسمانياً منقسماً في الوضع، فيلزم بالضرورة أن ينقسم الحالّ فيه بانقسامه، كالسواد والبياض | والحرارة B 25b والبرودة القائمة بالأجسام. وانقسام العلم العقلي الوجداني بأقسام كثيرة محال، لحلولها في محل منقسم محال.

قلنا: عنه جوابان. أحدهما أنّ العلم ليس صفة متمكنة في ذات العالم تمكّن اللون من المتلون والحرارة من الجسم الحار. إذ اللون له مقدار منبسط على محله، وكذا الحرارة، فلا جرم انقسما بانقسام المحل. وأمّا العلم فهو حالة مضافة للعالم إلى المعلوم، وهي لا تقبل الانقسام. كالأبوة مثلاً، فإنها صفة

[1] A: – أول [2] *Ishārāt*, 3, 244–248. [3] *Ishārāt*, 3, 249–250. [4] *Ishārāt*, 3, 251–252. [5] B: فإن

للأب مضافة إلى الابن، ثم لا يعقل انقسام الأبوة أصلاً بانقسام شخص الأب. فبم تنكرون على من يقول إنّ قيام العلم بنفس العالم كقيام الأبوة بالأب، لا كقيام السواد والبياض بالمحل، أو هو كقيام الإرادة وقيام المحبة والعداوة والميل والنفرة بالشخص؟ | A 131b فليست نسبة هذه الصفات إلى محالها كنسبة اللون إلى محله وكنسبة الحرارة إلى موضوعها، فإنهما ينبسطان على المحل فينقسمان بانقسامه، وأما هذه الصفات فلا تنبسط على المحل، فكذلك العلم.

والجواب الثاني أن نسلّم أنّ العلم صفة متمكنة في ذات العالم تمكّن اللون في[1] المتلون. ولكن نقول: إنه[2] إنما يلزم من انقسام المحل انقسام العلم الحال فيه، إذا لم يكن اجتماع ما يُفرض أجزاء للمحل شرطاً لحلول العلم[3] فيه. فبم تنكرون على من يقول إنّ المحل إنما يستعد لقيام العلم به باجتماع جملة ما يفرض له أجزاء، حتى لو فرض | B 26a انقسامه بطل الاستعداد، فيبطل العلم ويزول عن جميع المحل، بخلاف اللون المنتشر في أجزاء المحل وبخلاف الحرارة، فإنّ استعداد قبولهما ربما لا يتوقف على اجتماع الأجزاء، وأمّا استعداد قبول العلم فمتوقف عليه؟ فالعلم كالإرادة والميل والمحبة والعداوة والشهوة[4] والغضب، فليس شيء منها ينقسم بانقسام المحل، وإن كانت حالة في الأجسام منطبعة فيها، بدليل أنها موجودة في غير الآدمي من الحيوانات، وليست لها نفوس مفارقة حتى يقال إنها تقوم بها، بل هي

[1]B: من [2]B: – إنه [3]B: العلوم [4]A: والسهو

موجودة في أبدانها قائمة بالجسم. ويلزم من ذلك أن يكون لها مقدار منبسط على الجسم، لأنّ ما لا مقدار له لا يقارن الجسم ولا يقوم به. ومع ذلك فلا ينقسم شيء منها بانقسام الجسم الذي هو محلها، بل إذا اجتمعت[1] أجزاء المحل وحصل | (A 132a) فيه باجتماعها استعداد هذه الصفات تحل هذه الصفات بها، وإذا بطل الاستعداد بتفرّق أجزاء المحل بطلت هذه الصفات. فلم لا يجوز أن يكون العلم كذلك؟

والذي يؤكد هذه الرأيَ أنّ من جملة المدرَكات الجزئية الجسمانية ما لا يقبل الانقسام كما لا تقبله المدرَكات العقلية الوجدانية. فإنا ندرك عداوة شخص معين لشخص معين أو صداقته له، والمدرِك لهذه العداوة الشخصية عندكم قوة جسمانية وهي الوهم. وليس يختص هذا الإدراك بالآدمي، فإنّ الشاة تدرك من الذئب عداوته فتهرب منه، وليس تدرك | (B 26b) ذلك إلا بقوة جسمانية. ثم لا يخفى أنّ العلم بهذه العداوة الشخصية لا ينقسم بفرض انقسام القوة المدرِكة لها. فكذلك العلم العقلي الوجداني، وإن حل بقوة جسمانية منقسمة، فلا ينقسم بفرض انقسام المحل. وكما جاز أن يقوم العلم بالعداوة الشخصية، التي هي واحدة وتُعلم من حيث هي واحدة، بقوة جسمانية منقسمة، فلم لا يجوز أن يقوم العلم بالمعنى العقلي الذي لا ينقسم بقوة جسمانية منقسمة؟[2]

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[1] A B: اجتمع   [2] B: – فلم لا يجوز أن يقوم [...] جسمانية منقسمة

وهذا الآن يرِد نقضاً على قوله، "إنّ الشيء المنقسم إلى كثرة مختلفة الوضع لا يجوز أن يقارنه شيء غير منقسم".[1] فإنّ هذه العداوة الشخصية لا يُعقل انقسامها البتة، وهي عنده تقارن[2] الشيء المنقسم إلى كثرة مختلفة الوضع.

وبه تبين أيضاً أنّ الإدراك أمر وراء الارتسام. فإنّ العداوة الشخصية التي هي واحدة غير منقسمة لا يمكن أن تقارن | قوة جسمانية منقسمة وترتسم[3] A 132b
فيها، وقد أدركتها قوة جسمانية، فدلّ أنّ الإدراك غير الارتسام. والله أعلم.

[1] *Ishārāt*, 2, 406. [2] A: + الجسم [3] A: وترسم

المسألة السادسة:

[في أنّ من الموجودات ما لا يناله الحس]

قال، رحمة الله عليه،[1] في النمط الرابع: "إنه قد يغلب على أوهام الناس أنّ الموجود هو المحسوس، وأنّ ما لا يناله الحس بجوهره ففرض وجوده محال، وأنّ ما لا يتخصص بمكان أو وضع بذاته كالجسم، أو بسبب ما هو فيه كأحوال الجسم، فلا حظ له من الوجود. وأنت يتأتى لك أن تتأمل نفس المحسوس، فتعلم منه بطلان قول هؤلاء، لأنك ومن يستحق أن يخاطَب B 27a تعلمان أنّ هذه المحسوسات | قد يقع عليها اسم واحد لا على الاشتراك الصرف"، إلى آخر ما قال.[2]

أقول: أراد أن يبين أنّ من الموجودات ما لا يناله الحس، بل يناله العقل ويدركه. واستدل عليه بالكليات، كالإنسان الكلي. وهذا لا يفي بمقصوده. فإنّ الكليات ليست موجودة في الأعيان، بل هي معلومة للنفس معقولة عنده. وقول القائل إنها موجودة في الأذهان،[3] كلام مشهور مألوف، إذا بحثنا عنه علمنا أنّ المفهوم منه غير المفهوم من حقيقة الوجود. فلا معنى لكون الشيء موجوداً في الذهن إلا كونه معلوماً معقولاً مدرَكاً للعقل. وأمّا حقيقة الوجود فهي التي بها تكون حقائق الماهيات حاصلة في الأعيان. لا يفهم من الوجود إلا هذا. وكون الشيء موجوداً في الذهن له مفهوم آخَر غير

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[1] B: – عليه [2] *Ishārāt*, 3, 7–9. [3] B: + هذا

هذا المفهوم، وذلك كونه معلوماً عند العقل. والمقصود في هذا الفصل أن يثبت أنّ من جملة الموجودات العينية موجودات غير مدرَكة | بالحواس، A 133a وما ذكر من الكليات ليست موجودة في الأعيان، فما هو المقصود من هذا الفصل غير حاصل بما ذكر. والله أعلم.

المسألة السابعة:

[في إثبات واجب الوجود وتناهي العلل]

قال: "كل جملة كل واحد منها معلول، فإنها تقتضي علة خارجة عن آحادها، وذلك لأنها إمّا أن لا[1] تقتضي علة أصلاً، فتكون واجبة غير معلولة. وكيف يتأتى هذا وإنما تجب بآحادها"، إلى آخر الفصل.[2]

قلت: غرضه أن يبين تناهي العلل، ويقيم البرهان على أنها لا تتسلسل إلى غير | نهاية، ليثبت به ذات واجب الوجود. وهذه المقدمة—وهي أنّ كل B 27b جملة كل واحد منها معلول فإنها تقتضي علة خارجة عن آحادها—مسلمة لا نزاع فيها.

أما لا بد من إثبات مقدمة أخرى، وهي أنّ العلل لو تسلسلت إلى غير النهاية، لكانت هناك جملة مشتملة على آحاد غير متناهية، كل واحدة منها معلول. فما الدليل على إثبات هذه المقدمة؟ فإنّ الخصم يقول: ما لا يتناهى عدده لا يصح أن يوصف بأنه جملة. فالجملة والكل والجميع من عوارض الشيء المتناهي ولواحقه. وليس معنى الكل ها هنا هو كل واحد، كما لا يخفى عليك، بل معناه مجموع آحاد ليس وراءه شيء منها. ومجموع علل ليس وراءه علة أخرى لا وجود له عند هذا القائل، فلا وجود لكل العلل. بل أي مجموع يُفرَض، فإن وراءه علة أخرى، وهكذا يتسلسل إلى غير النهاية.

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[1] B: – لا [2] *Ishārāt*, 3, 23–24.

وهذا كما تقولون في دورات[1] الفلك. فإنّ عندكم ليس لها أول ومبدأ، وأعدادها الماضية لا نهاية لها. ثم كل واحدة من الدورات | فلها مبدأ وأول. A 133b ولم تقولوا إنه لما كان لكل واحدة منها مبدأ وأول كان للجملة مبدأ وأول. وكذلك النفوس البشرية المفارقة للأبدان بالموت لا نهاية لأعدادها عندكم، ولم يتقدمها زمان لم تكن موجودة فيه. وكل واحدة منها فلوجودها مبدأ زماني، أي هي مسبوقة بزمان لم تكن موجودة فيه. ثم لا تقولون: لما كان كل واحدة منها مسبوقة[2] بزمان لم تكن موجودة فيه كان | الكل كذلك، إذ B 28a الكل هو مجموع هذه الآحاد.

ولا يلزمكم أن تقولوا ذلك، لأنه ليس هناك كل وجملة. بل أي أعداد تؤخذ منها فإنّ وراءها أعداداً أُخر، ولا تنتهي قط إلى حدّ ليس وراءه شيء آخر منها، حتى يكون ذلك المحدود كلاً وجملة. ولو تُصوِّر أن يكون هناك كلٌّ هو مجموع هذه الآحاد، بحيث لا يبقى منها شيء إلا وهو داخل فيه، لزمكم بالضرورة أن تقولوا بأنّ للكل مبدأ زمانياً، أي تقدمه زمان لم يكن موجوداً فيه. فإنّ كل واحد من آحاد العشرة لما تقدمه زمان، فمجموع العشرة بالضرورة يتقدمها زمان ليست موجودة فيه. ولكن إنما لا يلزم ذلك لأنه لا كل ولا جملة هناك البتة.

فكذلك العلل، فإنّ كل واحدة منها ممكنة في ذاتها، ووجودها مستفاد عن غيرها، فتقتضي كل واحدة منها علة خارجة عن ذاتها. ولكن ليس

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[1]A: ذوات   [2]A B: مسبوقاً

هناك كلٌّ وجملة مشتملة على جميع الآحاد، حتى يقال بأنها تقتضي علة
خارجة عن آحادها. وإذا جاز أن تكون كل واحدة من هذه النفوس التي
لا نهاية لعددها مسبوقة | بزمان لم تكن موجودة فيه، ثم لم يكن كل النفوس A 134[a]
بالمعنى الآخر مسبوقاً بزمان لم يكن موجوداً فيه، فلم لا يجوز أن تكون كل
واحدة من هذه العلل الغير المتناهية عددها مسبوقة بعلة أخرى منها تستفيد
الوجود، ثم لا يكون كل العلل بالمعنى الآخر مسبوقاً بعلة أخرى منها يستفيد
الوجود؟ وأي فرق | بينهما؟ B 28[b]

والتحقيق فيه ما ذكرنا أنه إنما لا يلزم ذلك لا في العلل ولا في النفوس المفارقة ولا في أدوار الفلك، لأنه لا تنتهي أعدادها إلى حد ليس وراءه شيء منها، حتى يكون ذلك المحدود كلاً وجملة، فيلزم ذلك الكل ما يلزم كل واحد. والله أعلم.

المسألة الثامنة:

[في إثبات الوحدانية لواجب الوجود]

قال، رحمة الله عليه: "واجب الوجود المتعين، إن كان تعينه ذلك لأنه واجب الوجود، فلا واجب وجود غيره. وإن لم يكن تعينه لذلك، بل لأمر آخر، فهو معلول. لأنه إن كان واجب الوجود لازماً لتعينه، صار[1] الوجود لازماً لماهية غيره أو صفة، وذلك محال. وإن كان عارضاً فهو أولى بأن يكون لعلة. وإن كان ما تعين به عارضاً لذلك فهو لعلة. فإن كان ذلك وما يتعين[2] به ماهيته واحداً[3] فتلك العلة علة لخصوصية ما لذاته يجب وجوده، وهذا محال. وإن كان عروضه بعد تعين أول سابق، فكلامنا في ذلك السابق. وباقي الأقسام محال".[4]

قلت: المقصود إقامة البرهان على أنّ واجب الوجود واحد، وأنه لا يمكن أن يكون ذاتان كل واحد منهما واجب الوجود. وحاصل البرهان | (A 134ᵇ) أنه لو فرض ذاتان كل واحد منهما واجب الوجود، فقد تعين كل واحد منهما لا محالة وتميز عن الآخر، حتى صح أن يقال هذا وذاك. فنتكلم في أحدهما فنقول: هذا المتعين واجب الوجود. فلا يخلو إمّا أن تكون حقيقة واجب الوجود هو حقيقة هذا المتعين، أو لم تكن. فإن كان، | (B 29ᵃ) فليس غير هذا

[1]*Ishārāt*: كان [2]A: تعين [3]*Ishārāt*: ماهية واحدة [4]*Ishārāt*, 3, 36–41.

المتعين واجب الوجود. وإن لم تكن، بل هما حقيقتان، فلا يخلو إمّا أن يكون هذا التعين لازماً لحقيقة وجوب الوجود أو عارضاً لها، أو حقيقة وجوب الوجود لازمة لهذا التعين أو عارضة له. فإن كان هذا التعين لازماً لحقيقة وجوب الوجود، فليس غير هذا المتعين واجب الوجود. وهذا ظاهر لا شك فيه. وإن كان هذا التعين عارضاً لحقيقة وجوب الوجود، فكل ما كان عارضاً لشيء[1] فهو بعلة، فهذا التعين لحقيقة وجوب الوجود بعلة، لو لم تكن تلك العلة لم يكن هذا الواجب الوجود المتعين، فيكون واجب الوجود معلولاً، وهذا محال. وأيضاً، العرض إنما يلحق الشيء بعد تحقق ذلك الشيء وتعينه وتشخصه، فحقيقة وجوب الوجود إنما يعرض لها هذا التعين بعد أن تشخص وتعين أولاً، والكلام في ذلك التعين السابق. وإن كان حقيقة وجوب الوجود لازمة لهذا التعين أو عارضة له، فهي له بعلة أيضاً، فيكون هذا المتعين الواجب الوجود معلولاً في وجوب وجوده، وهذا محال. فإذن هذا التعين إما أن تكون حقيقته هي حقيقة وجوب الوجود، | وإما أن تكون لازمة لحقيقة وجوب الوجود، وعلى التقديرين يلزم أن لا يكون غير هذا المتعين واجب الوجود. فهذا حاصل هذا البرهان. A 135a

إلا أنّ فيه نظراً، وعند الكشف عن معنى لفظ واجب الوجود ولفظ التعين يتبين أنه لا دلالة فيه على المطلوب. | أما لفظ واجب الوجود فيوهم أنه أمر وجودي، وأنّ وجوب الوجود حقيقة محصلة ثابتة وراء الوجود. B 29b

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[1] B: وكل ما كان عارضا للشيء

وليس كذلك. فإنا لا نفهم من لفظ واجب الوجود سوى أنه موجود لا سبب ولا علة له، وأنه غير حاصل وجوده من غيره، وأنه لا يجوز عليه العدم. فوجوب الوجود هو عدم الحاجة إلى علة تفيد الوجود، وهذا سلب محض وعدم صرف، وليست حقيقة محصلة ثابتة غير الوجود زائدة على الوجود.[1] وأما لفظ التعين، فليس معناه سوى التميز عن غيره. فكل ذات تميز عن غيره حتى أمكن أن يشار إليه إما إشارة حسية أو عقلية فهو معين. وليس يجب أن يكون التميز بأمر وجودي زائدٍ[2] على ذات الشيء. فالماهيات المختلفة يتميز بعضها عن البعض بذواتها لا بأمر آخر زائد عليها، وإذا كانت موجودة كان كل واحد منها ذاتاً معيناً ولم يكن تعينه بأمر زائد عليه. فإذن ليس تعين واجب الوجود أمراً زائداً على ذات واجب الوجود، وليس وجوب الوجود حقيقة محصلة وجودية وراء الوجود، وإنما هو عدم الاحتياج إلى السبب والعلة. | ومن قال إنها حقيقة[3] وجودية زائدة على A 135b الوجود فهو مطالَب بالبرهان. ولا حجة لهم على إثبات واجب الوجود إلا ما سبق الاعتراض عليه، وهي على تقدير الصحة لا تفيد إلا تناهي العلل وقطع التسلسل وأن يكون هناك طرف ليس وجوده من غيره، وما وراء ذلك فلا دليل عليه.

[1]The following note appears in the margin of MS A, indicating that the last five words are missing from the autograph copy, with which A was collated: من قوله، ”غير الوجود“، إلى قوله، ”على الوجود“، ليست في نسخة المصنف رحمه الله.

[2]B: زائدة

[3]A: حقيقية

B 30a وإذا | تلخص معنى واجب الوجود، فلنرجع إلى الدعوى الأولى،[1] ولنهجر لفظ واجب الوجود لما فيه[2] من الإبهام والإيهام. فنقول: لمَ لا يجوز أن يكون ذاتان موجودان كل واحد منهما لا علة لوجوده؟

قوله، "إن كان تعينه ذلك لأنه واجب الوجود فلا واجب وجود غيره، وإن لم يكن تعينه لذلك بل لأمر آخر فهو معلول". فمعناه الملخص أنّ الوجود الذي لا علة له إن كان عبارة عن هذا المعين لا غير، فليس غير هذا المعين موجوداً لا علة له. وإن لم يكن عبارة عن هذا المعين، فهذا المعين[3] معلول. قلنا: الوجود الذي لا علة له ليست حقيقته عبارة عن هذا المعين. أمّا لم قلتم إنه يلزم منه أن يكون هذا المعين معلولاً؟

وقولكم إنّ واجب الوجود إما أن يكون لازماً لتعينه أو عارضاً، أو ما تعين به عارضاً لواجب الوجود أو لازماً. فمعناه الملخص أنّ[4] الوجود الذي لا علة له إما أن يكون لازماً لهذا المعين أو عارضاً له، أو هذا المعين لازماً لهذا الوجود أو عارضاً له. قلنا: بلى، هذا التقسيم صحيح. أمّا لم قلتم إنّ الوجود الذي لا علة له لا يجوز أن يكون لازماً لهذا المعين؟[5] | A 136a

فإن قالوا: كل ما كان لازماً للشيء فهو معلول، فيكون الوجود لهذا المعين معلولاً. قلنا: هذا على الإطلاق غير مسلّم. فما الدليل على أنّ كل ما يكون لازماً للشيء مطلقاً فهو معلول؟

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[1]A B: الأول [2]B: – لما فيه [3]A: – فهذا المعين [4]See the page opposite. [5]A: المعنى

In MS A, a *signe-de-renvoi* inserted here refers to two marginal notes, both in the copyist's hand. The first is the following note, which indicates that a long passage, starting here and ending on p. 258, l. 3 below, is missing from the autograph copy against which this manuscript was collated:

من قوله، "الوجود الذي لا علة له"، إلى قوله، "فإن قيل لو كان ذاتان"، ليس في النسخة التي كانت بخط المصنف رحمه الله.

The second marginal note, which appears on two pages (ff. 135[b]–136[a]), is a long insertion, marked at the end by a familiar correction indicator: *ṣaḥḥa ṣaḥḥa ṣaḥḥa*. This insertion does not fit into the main text, but appears to transmit the text of the autograph copy, which would thus read as follows:[1]

عدم الحاجة إلى العلة لازم لهذا المعين أو عارض له. قلنا: الأمر المحصل الموجود يوصف بكونه لازماً للشيء أو عارضاً، ويطلب له علة. أما العدم فلا يوصف بأنه لازم أو عارض إلا مجازاً، ولا يكون له علة البتة. فالموجود الذي لا علة لوجوده ليس هناك علة توجب أن لا يكون لوجوده علة حتى يصير ذلك الموجود معلولاً، بل لا علة لوجوده ولا علة لكونه لا علة لوجوده. نعم، لو كان وجوب الوجود حقيقة محصلة وجودية، وما تعين به هذا المتعين حقيقة أخرى، فحينئذ يستقيم أن يقال
A 136[a] بأنّ أحدهما لازم للآخر أو | عارض، ويفتقر ذلك إلى سبب وعلة، وينتظم هذا البرهان. أما السلب المحض والعدم الصرف فلا علة له أصلاً. فإذن لم يدل هذا البرهان على استحالة ذاتين موجودين كل واحد منهما لا علة لوجوده.

[1]For a discussion of MS A, see pp. 169–171 above.

فإن قالوا: لأنه إذا كان مفهوم أحدهما غير داخل في مفهوم الآخر، | (B 30b) بل هما مفهومان متغايران، فللعقل أن يطلب اللمية لتلك الملازمة، فيقول: لِمَ كان هذا لازماً له وهو غير داخل في حقيقته وغير ذاتي له؟ ولا ينقطع طلبه إلا بأن يجاب ويقال: لأنه وُجد علة أوجبت هذه الملازمة. قلنا: للعقل أن يطلب اللمية لتلك الملازمة إذا كانت تلك الملازمة ممكنة حقيقية في ذاتها، أم إذا كانت واجبة؟ الأول مسلّم، فإنّ ما كان ممكناً أن يكون وممكناً أن لا يكون فلا يترجح أحد طرفي الإمكان إلا بمرجح. أمّا إذا كان الشيء واجباً في ذاته، فليس للعقل أن يطلب العلة له، إذ[1] الواجب لذاته يستحيل أن يكون معلولاً. فلم قلتم إنّ وجوب الوجود لو كان لازماً[2] لهذا المعين يكون معلولاً؟ وأي استحالة في أن يكون ذات معين موجوداً ويكون وجوده زائداً على حقيقته لازماً واجباً لها، لا علة لذلك الوجود ولتلك الملازمة، فيكون ذلك الذات واجب الوجود،[3] أي يكون وجوده وجوداً غير مستفاد من علة وسبب، فيكون لا علة لوجوده ولا علة لكونه لا علة لوجوده؟ فإن امتنع هذا، بل يكون ذات واجب الوجود هو حقيقة الوجود الذي لا علة له فقط، | (A 136b) فتكون تلك الحقيقة وحدها وبمجردها قائمة بذاتها من غير شيء تكون فيه. ولا يخفى أن حقيقة الوجود عرض لا[4] يقوم بذاته، كحقيقة السواد والبياض. والمفهوم من الوجود حقيقة واحدة، والحقيقة الواحدة لا تنقسم إلى جوهر وعرض، | (B 31a) أعني إلى ما يكون قائماً

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[1]A: إذا [2]B: ملازماً [3]A: – الوجود [4]A: – لا

بذاته ويستحيل قيامه بغيره، وإلى ما يكون قائماً بغيره ويستحيل قيامه بذاته.

فإن قالوا: الوجود الواجب يباين الوجود الممكن. فالوجود الممكن عرض لا يقوم بذاته، والوجود الواجب ليس بعرض، بل هو قائم بذاته. قلنا: قد ذكرنا أنه لا معنى للوجود الواجب إلا وجود لا علة له. وقولنا لا علة له ليس أمراً محصلاً ثابتاً للوجود حتى يصير به مبايناً للوجود الذي له علة. فالوجود طبيعة واحدة، والمفهوم من حقيقته شيء واحد، وهو الكون في الأعيان فقط. وهذا في ذاته لا يختلف بأن كان له علة أو لم يكن. فأنتم بين أمرين. إمّا أن قلتم إنّ المفهوم من حقيقة وجود واجب الوجود غير المفهوم من حقيقة وجود[1] سائر الموجودات، أو ليس غيره. ولست أعني به المغايرة في أنّ أحدهما مفتقر[2] إلى علة والآخر غير مفتقر إليها، فإنّ هذه المغايرة لا ترجع إلى نفس مفهوم الوجود، بل إلى أمر خارج عن حقيقة مفهومه. فإن قلتم إنّ المفهوم من حقيقة وجود واجب الوجود غير المفهوم من حقيقة وجود[3] غيره، فقد نفيتم عنه حقيقة الوجود، أعني الكون في الأعيان. | فيلزمكم أن تقولوا[4] إنه معدوم، لأنه مهما ارتفع الكون في الأعيان A 137a جاء العدم. وإن قلتم، لا تغاير بين المفهومين، بل وجوده يشارك وجود غيره في[5] حقيقة الوجود، فقد قلتم إنّ الطبيعة الواحدة انقسمت إلى ما يستحيل أن يقوم | بغيره، وإلى ما يستحيل أن يقوم بذاته. وهو كقول القائل، اللون B 31b

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1A: – وجود   2A: مفتقراً   3A: – وجود   4A: – أن تقولوا   5A: و

ينقسم إلى ما يكون قائماً بذاته من غير محل يوجد فيه، وإلى ما يستحيل قيامه بذاته. ولا يخفى بطلان هذا القول.

فإن قيل: لو كان ذاتان كل واحد منهما موجودٌ لا علة لوجوده، فلا محالة تميز أحدهما عن الآخر. ولم يتميز بالوجود، فإنه حاصل لهما.[1] ولا بأنّ الوجود لا علة له، فإنّ هذا سلب وعدم، ومع أنه كذلك فلا يختص به أحدهما. فتميزٌّ كل واحد منهما عن الآخر إمّا بذاتيهما، وإما بأمر وجودي زائد على الذات. فإن كان التميز بالذات، فيلزم أن يكون لكل واحد منهما ماهية وراء الوجود، والوجود[2] عرض لازم لها تابع ومضاف إليها، فيكون كل واحد منهما معلولاً محتاجاً إلى علة. والماهية لا تصلح علة لوجودها، إذ العلة يجب أن تكون موجودة أولاً بالفعل حتى تفيد بعد ذلك وجوداً للغير، والماهية قبل وجودها لا وجود لها حتى تصير علة لوجود ذاتها. فإذن يحتاج الوجود المضاف إلى الماهية إلى علة خارجة عن ذاتها. وإن لم يكن التميز بالذات، فيلزم أن يختص كل واحد منهما بأمر وجودي زائد على الذات، أو يختص أحدهما به دون الآخر. فيكون ذات كل واحد منهما | A 137b أو أحدهما فيه تركيب، وكل مركب فهو معلول محتاج إلى أجزاء التركيب، كما علمتَ. فعلى التقديرين جميعاً يلزم أن يكون لما لا علة ولا سبب لوجوده علة وسبب، وهذا محال. | B 32a

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[1] A: لها [2] A: – والوجود

وإلى هذين المعنيين أشار بقوله، "لو التأم ذات واجب الوجود من شيئين أو أشياء تجتمع، لوجب بها، وكان الواحد منها أو كل واحد منها قبل الواجب الوجود ومقوماً لواجب الوجود"،[1] وبقوله، "كل ما لا يدخل الوجود في مفهوم ذاته، على ما اعتبرنا قبل، فالوجود غير مقوم له في ماهيته. ولا يجوز أن يكون لازماً لذاته، على ما بان. فبقي أن يكون عن غيره".[2]

قلنا: الجواب عنه ما أورده الإمام السعيد الغزالي قُدِّس[3] روحه في كتاب التهافت وقرّره غاية التقرير.[4] ونشير إلى طرف منه فنقول: بلى، التمييز بينهما يمكن أن يحصل بكل واحد من الطريقين.[5] أمّا[6] الدليل على امتناعهما، فلم لا يجوز أن يكون للموجود الذي لا علة لوجوده ماهية وراء الوجود، أو أن يقوم بذاته صفة وجودية وراء الذات؟

قولكم، "لو كان له ماهية وراء الوجود كان الوجود مضافاً إليها وعرضاً لازماً لها، فيكون معلولاً". قلنا: الوجود المضاف إلى الماهية الذي هو عرض لازم للماهية، مِن أين يلزم أن يكون معلولاً وأن يكون له علة فاعلة؟ وهذا مجرد دعوى لا دليل عليه البتة. فلم قلتم إنه لا يمكن أن يكون ماهية موجودة بذاتها لا سبب ولا علة لوجودها، ويكون الوجود لازماً لها أزلاً وأبداً، من غير | أن يكون هناك علة أوجبت تلك الملازمة؟ A 138a

فإن قالوا: الوجود الواجب ما لا تعلق له بالغير، والوجود المضاف إلى الماهية له تعلق بالماهية، إذ لا يتحقق | دون الماهية،[7] ويكون محتاجاً إلى B 32b

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[1] *Ishārāt*, 3, 44. [2] *Ishārāt*, 3, 46. [3] B: + الله [4] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, Discussions 5–8. [5] A: الطرفين [6] B: + ما [7] B: + إذ لا يتحقق دون الماهية

الماهية، فلا يكون واجباً. قلنا: قد ذكرنا أنّ لفظ الواجب لفظ مبهم، وأنّ معناه الملخص هو الذي لا علة له، فالوجود الواجب بهذا المعنى لا تعلق له بالعلة الفاعلة. أمّا يجوز أن يكون له تعلق بشيء آخر، إذا لم يكن ذلك الشيء علة فاعلة له. وقد سبق أنّ البرهان الذي ذكروه على وجود واجب الوجود، إن صح وسلم عن الاعتراض، فلم يدل إلا قطع تسلسل العلل إلى غير نهاية.[1] ولا يلزم منه إلا أن يكون من جملة الموجودات موجود لا علة لوجوده. أمّا أن لا يكون له ماهية وراء الوجود، بل يكون وجوداً مجرداً لا تعلق له بشيء البتة، فهذا غير لازم منه ولا دليل عليه. وليس كل متعلق بالشيء يكون معلولاً في وجوده.

وأمّا الكلام الثاني، وهو أنه لا يجوز أن يقوم بذات واجب الوجود صفة وجودية وراء الذات، فلا بد من إثباته. فما الدليل عليه؟ قولكم إنه يلزم منه أن يكون فيه تركيب، وكل مركب معلول. قلنا: إن عنيتم بالمركب أن تكون هناك صفة قائمة بالموصوف، فهذا تغيير العبارة فقط. فما الدليل على امتناعه؟ ومن أين يلزم من ذلك أن يكون معلولاً، بمعنى أن يكون لوجود الصفة أو لوجود الموصوف علة فاعلة؟ بل نقول: لا استحالة في أن يكون الطرف | الذي تنتهي به العلل موجوداً موصوفاً بصفة لا علة لوجوده | ولا A 138[b] B 33[a] علة لوجود صفته، بل كل واحد منهما غير محتاج إلى علة فاعلة، وإن احتاج أحدهما إلى صاحبه. واحتياج الصفة إلى الموصوف والموصوف إلى الصفة غير الاحتياج إلى العلة الفاعلة. وقد قام الدليل على أنّ الطرف الذي تنتهي

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[1] A: النهاية

به العلل غير محتاج إلى علة فاعلة. أمّا لم يقم دليل على امتناع قيام صفة به.

فإن رجعوا إلى قولهم إنّ الوجود الواجب ما لا تعلق له بالغير، فالجواب ما سبق. وهو أنّ الدليل لم يدل على إثبات واجب الوجود بهذا التفسير، وإنما دل على ذات غير محتاج إلى علة فاعلة لوجوده. فهذا القدر لا غير يلزم من استحالة التسلسل إلى غير النهاية. أمّا ما وراء ذلك من دعوى امتناع قيام الصفة به، وامتناع أن يكون له حقيقة وماهية وراء الوجود، فلا يلزم من ذلك البرهان، وليس هو أولياً مستغنياً عن الدليل، فلا بدّ من الدليل عليه.[1]

1A: + وهو أعلم

المسألة التاسعة:

[في أن بقاء المعلول ببقاء العلة]

قال، رحمه الله: "ما حقه في نفسه الإمكان فليس يصير موجوداً من ذاته. فإنه ليس وجوده من ذاته أولى من عدمه من حيث هو ممكن. فإن صار أحدهما أولى، فلحضور شيء أو غيبته. فوجود كل ممكن الوجود هو من غيره".[1]

قلت: إن أراد به[2] ابتداء الوجود، فلا كلام فيه. إذ الحادث بعدما لم يكن لا بد له من علة فاعلة. وإن | أراد دوام الوجود وبقاءه، فليس كذلك على الإطلاق، بل لا بد فيه من تفصيل. [A 139a]

[B 33b] فإن من الأعراض | ما ليس له هيئة قارة وبقاء حقيقي، ولكن تتجدد أمثاله على التعاقب، فيسمى باقياً مجازاً، فهذا البقاء يفتقر إلى العلة المبقية. وهذا كالحركة، فإن ابتداء وجودها—أعني حدوثها— كما افتقر إلى العلة الفاعلة لها، فبقاؤها ودوامها أيضاً يفتقر إلى تلك العلة، لأنّ بقاءها عبارة عن تجدد أمثالها. وقد ظن بعض المتكلمين أنّ الأعراض كلها كذلك. غير أنّ هذا الظن باطل، كما عرفته. وكذلك من الأعراض أيضاً ما يكون وجوده قسرياً، على خلاف ما يقتضيه حال موضوعه، بعلة قاسرة أوجبت وجوده مع ما يضاده وينافيه، فهذا أيضاً بقاؤه يفتقر إلى بقاء تلك العلة

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[1] *Ishārāt*, 3, 20. [2] B: – به

القاسرة. وما وراء ذلك من الجواهر والأعراض فبقاؤها مستغن[1] عن بقاء العلة.

على أنّ الموجود القسري إذا استقر في المحل وتمكن، وقويت العلة الموجبة له القاسرة للطبيعة التي تضاده، قد يبقى مدة بعد انعدام علته، إلى أن تقوى الطبيعة الأصلية فتدفعه وتعدمه. وهذا كالحرارة الحادثة في الماء المسخَّن بالنار، فإنها قسرية على خلاف ما يقتضيه طبع الماء، فإنّ طبع الماء يقتضي أن يكون بارداً بالفعل، إلا أنّ النار القوية تغلبها فتزيل عنه البرودة وتحدث فيه الحرارة. ثم تلك الحرارة تبقى فيه ساعات بعد انطفاء النار وانعدامها، إذ طبيعة الماء لا تقوى على إعدامها دفعة واحدة، وإنما | A 139b تعدمها على التدريج شيئاً فشيئاً. ولولا تلك الطبيعة المضادة للحرارة لبقيت الحرارة فيه دائمة. ثم لو افتقر | B 34a بقاء الحرارة فيه إلى العلة المبقية كما افتقر حدوثها إليها، لوجب أن تنعدم الحرارة في الحال عقيب انعدام النار. فحين بقيت مدة بعد انعدام علة حدوثها، عُلِم أن بقاءها مستغن[2] عن بقاء علتها.

ويدل عليه أيضاً حال السهم أو الحجر المرمي إلى جهة فوق. فإنّ فيه ميلاً طبيعياً بالقوة إلى جهة السفل، ثم الرمي يُحدث فيه ميلاً قسرياً إلى جهة العلو، وذلك الميل يوجب حركته إلى تلك الجهة. ويكون مقدار الحركة بحسب الميل الحادث فيه، والميل الحادث بحسب القوة الدافعة التي للرامي، إذ الرمي هو دفع المرمي بقوة إلى جهة المرمي إليه. فعلة حدوث الميل

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[1] A: مستغني   [2] A B: مستغنية

القسري فيه هو الدفع القوي، وهو حركة الرامي. ثم ينعدم الدفع الذي هو علة حدوث الميل القسري في السهم أو الحجر المرمي، ويبقى الميل القسري زماناً. فلو كان بقاء المعلول مفتقراً إلى بقاء العلة، لما تُصور بقاء الميل بعد انعدام الدفع.

ويدل عليه أيضاً حال الألوان. فإنها تبقى في المتلونات مع انعدام العلة الفاعلة لها. فإنّ من خضب كفه أو شعره بالحناء مثلاً يبقى ذلك اللون مدة مع انعدام العلة الفاعلة، أعني الحناء المطلية على اليد والشعر. ولو تُوهم أنه بقي من أجزاء الحناء على المحل الذي خُضب به شيء، واللون الذي له هو لون تلك الأجزاء، | (A 140a) كان هذا وهماً باطلاً. فإنّ الحناء ليس له ذلك اللون الحادث بسببه، بل له لون آخر لم يحدث في المحل ما يشبهه. ثم المبالغة | (B 34b) في غسل المحل بالصابون والأشنان والأشياء القلاعة يوجب زوال الأجزاء المجاورة للمحل. هذا مما لا يرتاب فيه عاقل. فاللون الحادث في محل الخضاب كيفية حدثت بسبب مجاورة الحناء. فهو العلة الفاعلة، وقد انعدمت العلة وبقيت الكيفية، فعُلم أنّ بقاءها ليست بالعلة المبقية. ولولا أنّ في مزاج الحيوان وطبعه ما يزيل ذلك اللون، إمّا بتحلل تلك الأجزاء الحاملة له، أو بسبب آخر لسنا الآن في تحقيقه، لبقي ذلك اللون دائماً. كما لو صُنع به ثوب أو شيء آخر من جملة الجمادات، فإنه يبقى اللون فيه ما دام ذلك الشيء باقياً. وكما لو جُزّ الشعر المخضوب، فإنه يبقى اللون فيه دائماً.

ويدل عليه أيضاً حال صور الأجسام القابلة للكون والفساد. فإنّ الهواء قد يستحيل ماء والماء يستحيل هواء، والعلة الفاعلة لهما هي البرودة

والحرارة، كما عرفته. ثم الصورة المائية الحاصلة في المادة القابلة لها قد تبقى بعد انعدام البرودة التي كانت علة فاعلة لها، وكذا الصورة[1] الهوائية الحاصلة بعلة الحرارة قد تبقى مع انعدام الحرارة.

فإن قيل: هذه الصور إنما تتبدل وتحدث في موادها بعلل وأسباب، وتبقى بعد زوال تلك العلل بعلة أخرى مبقية لها، وتلك العلة احتياج المادة إلى صورة واحدة، أية صورة كانت، | وامتناع خلوها عن الصور كلها. فإنه لما A 140b استحال وجودها بدون الصورة، ونسبة | الصور كلها إليها نسبة واحدة، B 35a والعلة السابقة أوجبت حدوث صورة واحدة فيها، وليس غيرها أولى بالمادة منها، فتحفظها المادة وتبقيها، فيكون بقاء هذه الصورة في المادة بعلة مبقية لها غير علة الحدوث. فليس البقاء مستغنياً عن العلة المبقية، وإن استغنى عن علة الحدوث.

قلنا: إذا جوزتم ذلك في الصور، فقولوا في جميع الأعراض، بل في جميع الأشياء الممكنة كذلك. فإنّ وجود السواد مثلاً وعدمه بالنسبة إلى الموضوع القابل له واحد، وليس يخلو الحال من أحد طرفي الوجود أو العدم، ولا ترجيح لأحدهما على الآخر نظراً إلى إمكانهما وإلى حال الموضوع. ثم لا بد أن يكون أحد الطرفين واقعاً، وأيهما وقع بسبب من الأسباب، إمّا الوجود أو العدم، فيجب أن يبقى، إذ لو لم يبق حتى وقع الآخر فقد ترجح عليه الآخر. ولا يترجح إلا بمرجح. فإذا لم يكن مرجح، فيستمر بقاء ذلك الواقع ضرورة أنه لا يرتفع إلا بوقوع الآخر، وقد تعذر وقوع الآخر من

[1] A: الصور

غير مرجح. فإن كان الواقع هو طرف العدم، فيستمر إلى أن توجد علة الوجود. وإن كان الواقع طرف الوجود فيستمر إلى أن توجد علة العدم. فوقوع أحد الطرفين في الابتداء يستدعي علة، ثم قد لا تبقى تلك العلة، ويستمر الطرف الواقع بعلة أخرى، وهي ضرورة امتناع خلو الموضوع عن أحد طرفي النقيض، كما قلتم في الصور إنها | تحدث بعلة، ثم لا تبقى تلك العلة، ويستمر وجود الصورة ضرورة امتناع خلو المادة عن إحدى | الصور. A 141a B 35b

فإن قيل: النار لما كانت علة لضوء الهواء في ظلمة الليل مثلاً، فكما انعدمت انعدم الضوء. وكما أنّ حدوث الضوء بسبب النار، فبقاؤه أيضاً بسببها ويفتقر إلى بقائها. وكذلك النور الحادث من الشمس يلازمها وجوداً وعدماً. دل أنّ بقاء المعلول ببقاء العلة.

قلنا: انعدام المعلول مع انعدام العلة في جميع الصور فضلاً عن صورة واحدة لا يدل على أنّ بقاء المعلول يفتقر إلى بقاء العلة، فلعل تلازمهما في العدم بسببٍ آخَر[1] سوى أنه يفتقر في بقائه إلى بقائها. ونحن إذا وجدنا في صورة واحدة أنّ المعلول يبقى بعد انعدام علته، علمنا أنه لا يحتاج بقاؤه إلى بقاء علته. ونزيده بياناً على اصطلاح المنطق، فنقول: لو كان بقاء المعلول مفتقراً إلى بقاء العلة، لما بقي المعلول مع انعدام العلة. فهذا شرطي متصل، فنستثني فيه نقيض التالي لينتج نقيض المقدم. فنقول: لكن بقي المعلول مع انعدام العلة، فأنتج: فليس بقاء المعلول مفتقراً

[1] A: أخرى

إلى بقاء العلة. وأمّا استثناء عين التالي لا ينتج شيئاً. فلو قلنا: لكن ما[1] بقي المعلول مع انعدام العلة، فلا يلزم منه شيء، كما عرفته في المنطق. وأمّا أنّ السبب في انعدام الضوء مع انعدام النار ماذا، فهو كلام آخر، وعدم اطلاعنا عليه لا يدل على عدمه حتى يضاف انعدام الضوء إلى انعدام النار. ثم لا يستحيل | أن يكون تلازمهما في العدم لأنّ بقاء الضوء A 141b هو بتجدد أمثاله، أو وجوده وجود قسري، وفي طبيعة | الهواء ما ينافيه B 36a ويضاده.

فإن قيل: ابتداء الوجود كما لا بد له من علة وسبب مرجح له على العدم، فدوام الوجود أيضاً لا بد له من ذلك. لأنّ ابتداء الوجود إنما احتاج إليه لا لعدمه السابق، إذ العدم السابق لا يستدعي فاعلاً ولا يقتضي علة، فلا تعلق له بعلة الوجود وفاعله. ولا لكونه موجوداً مسبوقاً بعدم، فإنّ هذه الجهة لهذا الموجود مستغنية عن العلة، إذ هذا الوجود لا يمكن أن يكون إلا بعد عدم، فهو مسبوق بالعدم[2] لذاته، لا لعلة وسبب. ولا يمكن أن يقال إنه يحتاج إلى العلة لمجموع أمرين، العدم السابق وكونه موجوداً بعد عدم، لأن كل واحد بانفراده لما كان مستغنياً عن العلة فكلاهما جملة أيضاً كان مستغنياً عنها. فبقي أنّ ابتداء الوجود إنما احتاج إلى العلة لكونه وجوداً ممكناً في ذاته محتاجاً إلى مرجح له على العدم. والوجود له[3] في الدوام أيضاً وجود ممكن، فيفتقر إلى العلة المرجحة.

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[1]A: – ما [2]B: العدم [3]B: – له

وإلى هذا أشار في أول النمط الخامس **بقوله**، "إنه قد يسبق إلى الأوهام العامية[1] أن تعلق الشيء الذي يسمونه مفعولاً بالشيء الذي يسمونه فاعلاً هو من جهة المعنى الذي به يسمي العامة المفعول مفعولاً والفاعل فاعلاً"، إلى قوله، "ففي مفهوم الفعل وجود وعدم، وكون ذلك الوجود بعد العدم كأنه صفة لذلك الوجود محمولة عليه. فأمّا العدم، | [A 142a] فلن يتعلق بفاعل وجود المفعول. وأمّا كون هذا الوجود موصوفاً بأنه بعد العدم، فليس بفعل فاعل ولا جعل[2] | [B 36b] جاعل، إذ هذا الوجود لمثل هذا الجائز العدم لا يمكن أن يكون إلا بعد العدم. فبقي أن يكون تعلقه من حيث هو هذا الوجود، إمّا وجود ما ليس بواجب الوجود، وإما وجود ما يجب أن يسبق وجوده العدم".[3]

ثم **قال**: "والآن لنعتبر أنه بأي[4] الأمرين يتعلق"، إلى قوله، "فقد بان أن هذا التعلق هو بسبب الوجه الآخر".[5]

الجواب: قلنا في ابتداء الوجود لا يُحتاج إلى العلة الفاعلة للعدم السابق، ولا لكونه موجوداً مسبوقاً بالعدم، ولا لمجموعهما، كما ذكرتم. ولا لكونه موجوداً ممكناً أيضاً، بل لأمر آخر. فإنكم في هذا السبر والتقسيم ما استوفيتم جميع الأقسام، بل ها هنا قسم آخر، وهو الخروج من العدم إلى الوجود، الذي يُعبَّر عنه بالحدوث. فالعدم السابق والوجود اللاحق قسمان معلومان متقابلان، وكون الوجود موصوفاً بصفة كونه مسبوقاً بالعدم قسم ثالث، والخروج من العدم إلى الوجود الذي يمكن أن يُعبَّر عنه بالتغير والتبدل

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[1]A: العامة [2]B: بجعل [3]*Ishārāt*, 3, 57–65. [4]*Ishārāt*: لأي [5]*Ishārāt*, 3, 65–70.

والتحرك والاستحالة والتأثر والانفعال والحصول قسم آخر. فإنّ الحصول غير الحاصل وغير العدم السابق وغير كون الحاصل موصوفاً بصفة. فالحاصل هو الأثر المستقر، والحصول هو التأثر. والحدوث هو الدخول في الوجود، وهو صيرورته موجوداً، وهو من[1] مقولة أن ينفعل. وأمّا الحادث الذي هو الوجود فهو من مقولة الكيف. وقد عرفتَ | الفرق بينهما، وعلمتَ أنّ A 142b التسخن غير السخونة والتسود غير السواد، | إلى غير ذلك. فكذا الحدوث B 37a غير الحادث، وصيرورته موجوداً غير الوجود. والمتعلق بالفعل والفاعل هو الانفعال، فإنه لا يُعقل دونه. أمّا الحاصل الواقع فلا تعلق له بالفاعل، إذ الفعل تحصيل، ومن ضرورته سبق العدم. فتبين أنّ ابتداء الوجود إنما احتاج إلى العلة الفاعلة لأجل الحدوث، ولا يُعقل[2] الحدوث في الدوام، إذ من ضرورته تقدم العدم. والله أعلم.

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[1]A: ومن [2]B: يفعل

المسألة العاشرة:

[في أن إمكان الحدوث صفة موجودة قبل الحدوث]

قال، رحمة الله عليه:[1] "كل حادث فقد كان قبل وجوده ممكن الوجود. فكان إمكان وجوده حاصلاً، وليس هو قدرة القادر عليه، وإلا لكان إذا قيل في المحال إنه غير مقدور عليه لأنه غير ممكن في نفسه، فقد قيل إنه غير مقدور عليه لأنه غير مقدور عليه، أو إنه غير ممكن في نفسه لأنه غير ممكن في نفسه. فتبين أنّ هذا الإمكان غير كون القادر عليه قادراً عليه. وليس شيئاً معقولاً بنفسه يكون وجوده لا في موضوع، بل هو إضافي، فيفتقر إلى موضوع. فالحادث تتقدمه قوة وجود وموضوع".[2]

قلت: غرضه أن يبين أنّ المادة الأولى قديمة وليست بحادثة. فإنها إن كانت حادثة، كان إمكان حدوثها حاصلاً قبل حدوثها، وكان ذلك الإمكان في مادة أخرى غيرها، وهكذا يتسلسل إلى غير النهاية. فلا بد وأن يُنتهى إلى مادة ليست بحادثة حتى ينقطع التسلسل.[3] إلا أنّ ما ذكره كلام مجمل، وعند البحث عنه ينكشف لذوي الإنصاف | أنه قاصر عن إفادة غرضه المذكور. A 143a

[1] B: – عليه [2] *Ishārāt*, 3, 78–84. [3] B: – إلى غير النهاية [...] ينقطع التسلسل

فنقول: قوله، "كل حادث | فقد كان قبل وجوده ممكن الوجود"، يحتمل B 37b معنيين. أحدهما أنه قبل وجوده ليس بضروري العدم، وليس بحيث يجب أن لا يوجد. والثاني أنه قبل وجوده مستعد الوجود، وأنّ استعداد وجوده حاصل قبل وجوده.

فإن أراد به المعنى الأول، فلا كلام فيه. لكنّ الإمكان بذلك المعنى ليس أمراً محصلاً موجوداً حتى نبحث عن حقيقته، أنه قدرة القادر، أو شيء معقول بنفسه غير مفتقر إلى موضوع، أو أمر في موضوع. بل معنى هذا الإمكان هو سلب ضرورة العدم. وعدم الضرورة ليس أمراً موجوداً.

وإن أراد به المعنى الثاني، فلا نساعده في ذلك على الإطلاق، بل فيه تفصيل. فإن كان الحادث مما لا وجود له إلا في محل يقوم به، فاستعداد وجوده حاصل في ذلك المحل قبل وجوده. وهذا لا نزاع فيه. أمّا إن كان الحادث مما لا يفتقر إلى محل يوجد فيه، فليس يجب أن يكون استعداد وجوده حاصلاً قبل وجوده. فلا بد من الدليل على أنّ مثل هذا الحادث قبل وجوده ممكن الوجود بهذا المعنى.

فإن قالوا إنه إن[1] لم يكن ممكن الوجود قبل وجوده، كان ممتنع الوجود. قلنا: ولم قلتم ذلك؟ فإنّ الامتناع لا يقابل هذا الإمكان، بل يقابل الإمكان بالمعنى الأول الذي هو عبارة عن سلب ضرورة العدم. أمّا هذا الإمكان مع الامتناع يجوز أن يُسلبا جميعاً عن شيء واحد في حالة واحدة، إذ ليس كل ما لا يوجد استعداد وجوده في محل كان | ممتنعاً محالاً. B 38a

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[1] A: – إن

A 143b وتمام الكشف | عن هذا الكلام هو[1] أن ماهيات الأشياء قبل وجودها متميزة بعضها عن البعض بذواتها، وهي منقسمة إلى قسمين: قسم يستحيل أن يدخل في الوجود، ويسمّى ممتنعاً ومحالاً وغير متصوَّر وغير ممكن. وقسم لا يستحيل أن يدخل في الوجود، ويسمى ممكناً ومتصوّراً وغير ممتنع وغير محال. وليست هذه الأسامي لها لقيام صفة بذواتها، إذ المعدوم لا يكون محلاًّ[2] لأمر موجود. فليس الإمكان المضاف إلى الماهية المعدومة صفة موجودة قائمة بها، كما ليس الامتناع المضاف إليها أمراً موجوداً فيها.

ولست أقول إنّ الموضوع الذي يقبل العرض، أو المادة التي تقبل الصورة، ليس فيها استعداد لقبول العرض والصورة. بل لا بد وأن يكون ذلك الاستعداد حاصلاً، وهو صفة موجودة في ذلك المحل، ولا بأس بتسميتها إمكاناً، حتى يقال: هذا الموضوع فيه إمكان قيام العرض به، وهذه المادة فيها إمكان حصول الصورة بها. إلا أنّ هذا الإمكان غير، وإمكان الشيء في ذاته غير. فإنا لا نحتاج في معرفة كون الشيء ممكناً في ذاته أو مستحيلاً في ذاته إلى أن نبحث عن أحوال جميع الموجودات، حتى إذا وجدنا في جملتها ما يكون فيه استعداد قبوله، قلنا إنه ممكن في ذاته، وإذا لم نجد قلنا إنه مستحيل في ذاته. بل نعرف إمكان الشيء في ذاته أو امتناعه في ذاته من غير أن نلتفت[3] | إلى حال غيره. فإنّ السواد لون هو ممكن | B 38b A 144a الوجود في ذاته، سواء كان في الوجود موضوع يقبله وفيه إمكان وجوده

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[1] B: وهو [2] B: محالاً [3] A: نلتف

واستعداد حدوثه، أو لم يكن. فليس معنى كونه ممكن الوجود في ذاته أنّ في جملة الموجودات موجوداً فيه استعداد أن يحل به السواد، فإنّ مع فرض عدمه كان السواد ممكن الوجود في ذاته. وإذا قلنا إنّ اللون الذي هو سواد وهو بعينه بياض مستحيل الوجود في ذاته، فليس معناه أنه ليس في جملة الموجودات ما يقبله. فإنا نعرف أولاً استحالته في ذاته من غير أن نبحث عن أحوال الموجودات. ثم بعدما علمنا استحالته في ذاته نحكم بأنه ليس من جملة الموجودات ما[1] يَستعد لقبوله، إذ المحل إنما يستعد لقبول شيء ممكن في ذاته دون ما كان ممتنعاً في ذاته. فعُلم أنّ إمكان الشيء في ذاته غير، واستعداد المحل لقبوله غير.

فإن أطلقنا اسم الإمكان على هذا الاستعداد، كان اسم الإمكان مشتركاً بين معنيين. والإمكان الذي هو بمعنى الاستعداد يفتقر إلى محل يوجد فيه لا محالة. أمّا الإمكان بالمعنى الأول فلا يفتقر إلى محل يوجد فيه، إذ ليس هو أمراً وجودياً، بل هو أمر سلبي. إذ معناه أنه ليس بواجب العدم، فهو سلب ضرورة العدم، والامتناع سلب تصور الوجود. وكل حادث فهو قبل وجوده ممكن الوجود بالمعنى الأول، لا بالمعنى الثاني.

B 39a ويتأيد هذا كله | بما أورده الإمام السعيد الغزالي[2] في كتاب التهافت
A 144b رداً على كلامهم في هذه المسألة، فإنها | إشكالات قوية[3] واقعة جداً.[4] منها النفوس البشرية، فإنها حادثة، وهي قبل وجودها ممكنة الوجود، وليس

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[1]A: وما [2]B: + رضي الله عنه [3]B: – قوية [4]Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 70 ff.

إمكان وجودها في مادة، فإنها مبرأة عن المادة. وعذرهم عنه—بأنّ المادة ممكن لها أن يدبرها نفس بشري، فيكون الإمكان السابق على الحدوث مضافاً إلى المادة—عذر فاسد. فإنّ الإمكان السابق على حدوثها ليس أمراً حادثاً، فإنّ النفوس قبل حدوثها لم تزل ممكنة الحدوث، واستعداد البدن لأن تدبرها النفس وتتعلق بها أمر حادث مع حدوث البدن، فليس هذا الاستعداد موجوداً قبل وجود البدن. فإن كان الإمكان السابق على حدوثها هو هذا الاستعداد، فالنفس قبل وجود البدن ليست ممكنة الحدوث في ذاتها، فكانت ممتنعة في ذاتها ثم صارت ممكنة. ولا يخفى بطلان هذا الكلام. وهو[1] أعلم.

[1] B: والله

المسألة الحادية عشر:

[في أن الواحد لا يصدر منه إلا واحد]

قال، رحمه الله:[1] "فمفهوم أنّ علةً ما بحيث يجب عنها أ غير مفهوم أن علة ما بحيث يجب عنها ب. وإذا كان الواحد يجب عنه شيئان، فمن حيثيتين مختلفتي المفهوم، فمختلفتي الحقيقة. فإما أن يكونا من مقوماته أو من لوازمه.[2] فإن فرضتا من لوازمه، عاد الطلب جذعاً، فينتهي إلى حيثيتين من مقومات العلة مختلفتين، إما للماهية وإما لأنه موجود وإما بالتفريق. فكل ما يلزم عنه اثنان معاً ليس أحدهما بتوسط الآخر فهو منقسم الحقيقة".[3]

A 145[a] B 39[b] **قلت**: | | الغرض منه بيان كيفية وجود الأشياء من المبدأ الأول على الترتيب الواجب فيها، وكيفية انتهاء الموجودات كلها مع اختلاف أجناسها وأنواعها وأشخاصها إلى مبدأ واحد. وهذا الغرض لا يتم إلا بأصلين. أحدهما هذا الذي أشار إليه الآن من أنّ الواحد من كل وجه لا يصدر عنه إلا شيء واحد. والثاني أنّ واجب الوجود واحد من جميع الجهات لا كثرة فيه بوجه من الوجوه.

أمّا هذا الأصل الثاني، فالإشكال عليه ما سبق ذكره، أنّ الواجب الوجود الذي دل البرهان على وجوده هو الموجود الذي لا علة لوجوده. فهذا القدر لا غير يلزم من ضرورة امتناع تسلسل العلل إلى غير نهاية. وما

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[1]B: + عليه [2]*Ishārāt*: + أو بالتفريق [3]*Ishārāt*, 3, 97–102.

وراء ذلك من كونه حقيقة وجوب الوجود، أو حقيقة الوجود الواجب غير مضاف إلى ماهية وغير ممكن له أن يقوم به صفة، فلا يلزم من ذلك ولا دليل عليه البتة. بل لا استحالة في أن يكون ذات الأول واجباً، وصفاته من العلم والقدرة والإرادة وغير ذلك مما جاز عليه أيضاً واجبة غير محتاجة إلى علة وسبب، بل لم تزل موجودة للذات ولا علة لها كما لا علة للذات، فيكون وجود الموجودات عنه بالإرادة القديمة القائمة بالذات.

وأمّا الأصل الأول، وهو أنّ الواحد من كل وجه لا يصدر عنه إلا شيء واحد، فنقول: لا يصدر عنه إلا واحد بالعدد، أو[1] إلا واحد بالنوع؟ فإن قلتم | [A 145b] إلا واحد بالعدد، فهو غير مسلّم ولا دلالة فيما ذكرتم عليه. فإنّ أ و ب إذا كانا شخصين من نوع واحد، | [B 40a] جاز أن يجبا عن العلة بجهة واحدة. وإنما يلزم اختلاف الجهة والحيثية إذا كان الشيئان الصادران مختلفي الحقيقة والذات.

وإن قلتم بالثاني، فالوجود من حيث أنه وجود نوع واحد لا اختلاف فيه[2] إلا بالشخص والعدد، فيجوز أن يصدر من الأول ويفيض على كل ماهية تقبله من الماهيات البسيطة عقلاً كانت أو نفساً أو فلكاً أو كوكباً أو عنصراً. فإنّ هذه[3] الأشياء تختلف بحقائقها لا بوجودها، وهي معلولة في وجودها لا في ماهياتها. نعم، لو كانت معلولة في ماهياتها ووجودها جميعاً، لاستقام[4] أن يقال إنّ هذه الماهيات المختلفة المعلولة لا تكون عن علة واحدة

[1] B: و   [2] A B: فيها   [3] A: + فإن هذه   [1] B: لا استقام

بجهة واحدة. أمّا الوجود المعلول، فلا اختلاف فيه[1] إلا بالعدد فقط، فجاز أن يجب عن علة واحدة بجهة واحدة.

وهذا كالضوء الفائض من الشمس. فإنها لا تفيض على الأجسام المختلفة بحيثيات مختلفة وجهات متعددة، بل بجهة واحدة. نعم، الحرارة التي تفيض منها أيضاً على بعض الأجسام القابلة لها إنما تفيض بجهة أخرى غير الجهة التي يفيض عنها الضوء، لأنهما شيئان مختلفان بالحقيقة. وأمّا[2] كل واحد من الحرارة والضوء فإنما يفيض على الأجسام القابلة لها، وإن كثرت أعدادها، بجهة واحدة. فالطبيعة الواحدة تقتضي نوعاً واحداً. ثم ذلك النوع قد يكون في شخص | واحد، وقد تتعدد أشخاصه بسبب خارج عن A 146a تلك الطبيعة، ولم يكن كل شخص حاصلاً من تلك الطبيعة بجهة أخرى. | B 40b أليس أنكم قلتم بأنّ الصور والأعراض التي تفيض على المواد القابلة للكون والفساد كلها تفيض من عقل واحد تسمونه العقل الفعال مرة وواهب الصور أخرى؟ ولا يخفى أنّ هذه الصور والأعراض مما لا تتناهى أعدادها وأشخاصها. ولا يمكنكم أن تقولوا إنّ كل واحد منها إنما يفيض من العقل بجهة أخرى، إذ يلزم من ذلك أن يكون فيه جهات مختلفة غير متناهية عددها. ولا يخفى بطلان ذلك. فإذا جوزتم أن يفيض[3] وجود هذه الصور والأعراض كلها من واهب الصور لا بجهات متعددة، فجوزوا أن يفيض نوع الوجود على الماهيات البسيطة من المبدأ الأول الواجب الوجود، وقد

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[2]A B: فيها [3]B: أما [4]A: – أن يفيض

استغنيتم عن تلك التكلفات التي ذكرتموها في كيفية وجود الموجودات من الأول الحق. والله أعلم.

المسألة الثانية عشر:

[في أنّ أفعال القوى الجسمانية متناهية]

قال، رحمة الله عليه:[1] "اعلم أنه لا يجوز أن يكون جسم ذو قوة غير متناهية محرِّكاً جسماً غيره. لأنه لا يمكن أن يكون إلا متناهياً، فإذا حرك بقوته جسماً ما من مبدأ نفرضه حركات لا تتناهى في القوة، ثم فرضنا أنه يحرك أصغر من ذلك الجسم بتلك القوة، فيجب أن يحركه أكثر من ذلك[2] المبدأ المفروض، فتقع الزيادة التي بالقوة في الجانب الآخر، فيصير الجانب الآخر متناهياً أيضاً. هذا محال".[3]

ثم **قال**: | [A 146b] "لا يجوز أن يكون في جسم من الأجسام قوة تحرك ذلك الجسم طبيعية بلا نهاية، وذلك لأنّ قوة ذلك الجسم أكثر وأقوى من قوة بعضه لو انفرد. وليس بزيادة | [B 41a] جسمه في القدر يؤثر في منع التحريك حتى تكون نسبة المحركين والمتحركين واحداً، بل المتحركان في حكم ما لا يختلفان، والمحركان مختلفان. فإن حركا جسميهما من مبدأ مفروض حركات بغير نهاية، عرض ما ذكرنا. وإن حركت الأصغر حركات متناهية، كانت الزيادة على حركاتها على نسبة متناهية، فكان الجميع متناهياً".[4]

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[1]B: – رحمة الله عليه [2]*Ishārāt*: + من [3]*Ishārāt*, 3, 165–169. [4]*Ishārāt*, 3, 172–174.

قلت: المقصود منه ما ذكره بعد هذا، أنّ القوة المحركة للسماء غير متناهية وغير جسمانية، فهي مفارقة عقلية. وحاصل الدلالة فيما ذكر أنّ القوة الجسمانية لو حَركت حركات غير متناهية، فإمّا أن كانت قسرية أو طبيعية. فإن كانت قسرية، وفُرض المتحركان بها مختلفي المقدار، ومبدأ الحركة واحد، كانت حركة الأصغر منهما أكثر من حركة الأكبر، وحركة الأكبر فرضت غير متناهية، فكانت حركة الأصغر أزيد من غير المتناهي، وتلك الزيادة لم تقع في الطرف المبدأ، فتقع في الطرف الآخر، وذلك محال. وإن فُرضت الحركة طبيعية، كانت حركة الأكبر أكثر من حركة الأصغر، ويلزم ذلك المحال بعينه.

والإشكال عليه أن يقال: لم قلتم إنّ حركة أحد الجسمين تكون أكثر من حركة الآخر؟ فإنّ الأكثر والأقل من عوارض الشيء المتناهي. فالمقداران إذا فُرضا غير | متناهيين، لا يمكن أن يقال إنهما متساويان، أو أحدهما A 147[a] أكثر والآخر أقل. لأنّ المتساويين هما اللذان إذا أُطبق أحدُهما على الآخر بالفرض انطبق عليه، فلم يفضل أحدهما عن الآخر، | والمتفاوتان هما اللذان B 41[b] يفضل أحدهما عن الآخر. وإنما يمكن هذا الفرض في المقدارين المتناهيين لا في غير المتناهيين، لأنّ من ضرورة التفاضل أن ينقطع[1] المفضول دون الفاضل، وما لا يتناهي لا ينقطع، فلا يفضل عليه الآخر، فلا يكون أكثر منه.

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[1]A: يقطع

وأمّا تأثير اختلاف مقدار الجسمين المتحرّكين بالقسر من قوة واحدة، واختلاف القوتين في الكثرة والقلة في الجسمين المختلفي المقدار المتحركين بالطبع على ما فَرضهما في الصورتين، ففي سرعة الحركة وبطئها. ففي الصورة الأولى حركة الجسم الأصغر أسرع من حركة الجسم الأكبر، وفي الصورة الثانية حركة الجسم الأكبر أسرع من حركة الجسم الأصغر. وليس من ضرورة اختلافهما في السرعة والبطء أن يكون أحدهما أكبر من الآخر. دل عليه حركات الأفلاك وأدوارها. فإنّ حركة الفلك الأعظم التي هي الحركة اليومية في غاية السرعة، وحركة فلك الكواكب الثابتة في غاية البطء، وحركات باقي الأفلاك مختلفة في السرعة والبطء. ولا يمكنكم أن تقولوا إنّ بعضها أكثر من بعض، إذ لا بداية لها عندكم. ثم أنتم بين أمرين. إما أن قلتم بأنّ أدوار فلك القمر وحركاتها أو الفلك الأعظم أكثر من أدوار فلك زحل والمشتري وحركاتهما، أو ليست بأكثر منها. فإن قلتم إنها ليست بأكثر منها، فصح أنه | (A 147[b]) ليس من ضرورة اختلاف الحركتين في السرعة والبطء أن يكون أحدهما أكثر من الآخر. وإن قلتم إنها أكثر منها، فيلزمكم أن تقولوا | (B 42[a]) إنّ غير المتناهيين قد يكون أحدهما أكثر من الآخر. وبطل استدلالكم بكون إحدى الحركتين أكثر من الأخرى على كونهما متناهيين. والله أعلم.

المسألة الثالثة عشر:

[في أنّ النفوس الإنسانية لا يضرها فقدان البدن بالموت]

قال، رحمه الله:[1] "إذا كانت النفس الناطقة قد استفادت ملكة الاتصال بالعقل الفعال لم يضرّها فقدان الآلات، لأنها تعقل بذاتها، كما علمتَ، لا بآلتها.[2] ولو عقلت بآلتها لكان لا يعرض للآلة كلال البتة إلا ويعرض للقوة كلال، كما يعرض لا محالة لقوى الحس والحركة. ولكن ليس يعرض هذا الكلال، بل كثيراً ما تكون القوى الحسية والحركية في طريق الانحلال، والقوة العقلية إما ثابتة، وإما في طريق النمو والازدياد"، إلى آخره.[3]

قلت: هذا بناء منه على أنّ النفس الناطقة جوهر قائم بنفسه مفارق للأجسام، وقد ذكرنا الإشكال عليه، فلا نعيده.

وقوله، "لو عقلت بآلتها لكان لا يعرض للآلة كلال إلا ويعرض للقوة كلال، لكن ليس يعرض هذا الكلال". قلنا: لم قلتم إنه ليس يعرض هذا الكلال؟ فإنّ الخصم يقول: آلة النفس في إدراك المعقولات هي الدماغ، وكلما عرضت له آفة اختل أمر الإدراكات. نعم، ربما تعرض الآفة والخلل لقوة السمع أو البصر أو غير ذلك من الحواس، ويكون الدماغ

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[1] B: – رحمه الله [2] A: بآلاتها [3] *Ishārāt*, 3, 244–248.

مع ذلك سليماً | عن الآفات، فيختل عند ذلك إدراك المحسوسات دون A 148a المعقولات، إذ لا خلل في آلتها. ثم إن كان لا يضره فقدان الآلة، فلا يضره اختلالها ومرضها. لكن اختلال الدماغ ومرضه يضر بإدراك المعقولات، | B 42b فكيف لا يضر عدمه! فإنّ الفائت بالمرض صفة السلامة فقط، فإذا أضر به فوات الصفة وحدها، فأولى أن يضر فوات الصفة والموصوف جميعاً.

قال: "إنّ القوى القائمة بالأبدان يكلّها تكرر الأفاعيل، لا سيما القوية، وخصوصاً إذا أتبعَتْ فعلاً فعلاً على الفور، وكان الضعيف في[1] مثل تلك الحال غير مشعور به"، إلى آخره.[2]

قلت: الخصم يقول: هذا حكم بعض القوى، لا حكم الكل. وهذه القوة المنطبعة في الدماغ التي تنازعنا فيها حكمها عندي على خلاف سائر القوى. فلم قلتم لا يجوز ذلك؟ وهذا هو الجواب عن قوله، "ما كان فعله بالآلة، ولم يكن له فعل خاص، لم يكن له فعل في الآلة".[3] فنقول: هذا حكم البعض. ولا مستند لما ذكرتم إلا الاستقراء، ولا يخفى أنه لا يفيد اليقين، فلعل ما تنازعنا فيه يخالف حكمه حكم الجميع.

ثم يسلّم الخصمُ أنّ النفس تعقل بذاتها لا بآلتها، وأنّ الدماغ ليس آلة لها في إدراك المعقولات، ولكنه[4] موضوعها الذي لا وجود لها إلا فيه، وافتقارها إليه افتقار العرض إلى الموضوع، لا افتقار الفاعل إلى | الآلة. فالمحسوسات A 148b لا تدركها النفس إلا بآلات مخصوصة، وأمّا المعقولات الصرفة فتدركها

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[1]A: و [2]*Ishārāt*, 3, 249–250. [3]*Ishārāt*, 3, 251–252. [4]A B: ولكنها

بذاتها لا بآلة. وعدم الدماغ لا يضرّ من حيث فوات الآلة، لكن من حيث فوات المحل الذي لا وجود لها إلا فيه. والله أعلم.[1]

[1] A: – والله أعلم

المسألة الرابعة عشر:

[في أنّ النفوس الإنسانية يستحيل عليها الفناء]

قال، رحمه الله:[1] "إنّ الجوهر العاقل منا له[2] أن يعقل بذاته. ولأنه أصل، فلن يكون مركباً من قوة قابلة للفساد مقارنة لقوة الثبات"، إلى قوله، "وإذا كان كذلك، | لم تكن أمثال هذه في أنفسها قابلة للفساد بعد وجوبها بعللها وثباتها بها".[3] B 43a

قلت: أشار به إلى أنّ النفوس البشرية يستحيل عليها العدم، بل المفارقات كلها، بل كل جوهر بسيط ليس وجوده في محل يقوم به. وبنى هذا الكلام على أصل تقدم ذكره، وهو أنّ كل حادث فقوة وجوده حاصل قبل وجوده في مادة. قال: فكذلك كل ما يفسد وينعدم، فلا بد أن تكون قوة فساده وعدمه موجودة في مادة قبل عدمه. فكما أنّ إمكان الوجود لا بد أن يكون حاصلاً قبل الوجود، فإمكان العدم لا بد أن يكون حاصلاً قبل العدم، إذ لو لم يكن كذلك كان ممتنع العدم. وكما أنّ قوة الوجود تستدعي محلاً تقوم به، ويكون ذلك المحل قابلاً يطرأ عليه ذلك الوجود، فكذا قوة العدم تستدعي محلاً يطرأ عليه العدم. والقابل في الصورتين يبقى مع المقبول، فيلزم أن يكون الشيء الذي يطرأ عليه العدم مركباً من شيئين، الشيء الذي ينعدم والشيء القابل | الذي يبقى. والمفارقات، بل الجواهر البسيطة التي A 149a

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[1] B: – رحمه الله [2] *Ishārāt*: مثاله [3] *Ishārāt*, 3, 261–264.

ليس[1] وجودها في محل لا تركيب فيها، فيستحيل عليها العدم. والإشكال عليه ما سبق، أنّ إمكان الوجود لا يقتضي مادة يقوم بها، فهكذا[2] إمكان العدم.

ثم لا يتمشى هذا الكلام في النفوس البشرية. فإنكم قلتم بأنّ إمكان حدوثها حاصل في البدن قبل حدوثها، فليكن إمكان عدمها حاصلاً فيه قبل عدمها. فإن قالوا: نحن لا نقول إنّ إمكان حدوثها في البدن، بل نقول فيه إمكان
B 43b تعلقها | به وتدبيرها له، فلا جرم نقول فيه أيضاً إمكان بطلان هذا التعلق وترك التدبير. قلنا: إمكان التعلق لا يكفي لوجودها ما لم يكن وجودها ممكناً في ذاته.[3] فإنّ المحل إنما يستعد لتعلق الشيء الممكن في ذاته به دون ما ليس بممكن. فإمكانه في ذاته غير، وإمكانه التعلق بالمحل غير. وكون الشيء ممكناً أو ممتنعاً في ذاته قد يُعرف قبل النظر في حال المحل أنه هل قام به استعداد قبوله أو لم يقم، على ما قررنا. فيلزمكم إذن أن تقولوا بأن إمكان[4] وجود النفس حاصل قبل وجودها، وأنه يستدعي محلاً يقوم به، وليس ذلك إلا البدن. وإذا جاز أن يقوم بالبدن، مع إمكان تعلق النفس به، إمكانُ وجود النفس في ذاتها، فلم لا يجوز أن يقوم به إمكان عدمها؟ وإن لم يقتض إمكان الوجود في ذاته مادة يقوم بها، فلا يقتضي إمكان العدم أيضاً مادة وموضوعاً يوجد فيه. والله أعلم.[5]

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[1] A B: ليست [2] B: فكذا [3] A B: ذاتها [4] A: بإمكان [5] A: – والله أعلم

A 149b

المسألة الخامسة عشر: |

قال، رحمه الله:[1] "واجب[2] الوجود يجب أن يعقل ذاته بذاته،[3] ويعقل ما بعده من حيث هو علة لما بعده منه وجوده، ويعقل سائر الأشياء من حيث وجوبها في سلسلة الترتيب النازل من عنده طولاً وعرضاً".[4]

ثم **قال**: "فالواجب الوجود وجب أن لا يكون علمه بالجزئيات علماً زمانياً حتى يدخل فيه الآن والماضي والمستقبل، فيعرض لصفة ذاته أن تتغير".[5]

فهذه ثلاث دعاوٍ.[6] أحدها أنه يعلم ذاته، والثاني أنه يعلم غيره، والثالث أنه لا يعلم الجزئيات | إلا على وجه كلي. وعلى كل واحد منها شكوك قوية وإشكالات واقعة. وقد أورده الإمام السعيد الغزالي قدس الله روحه العزيز[7] في كتاب التهافت على وجه لا مزيد عليها، فلا[8] فائدة في نقلها. فمن أراد معرفتها فليطالع ذلك الكتاب، فإنّ كل الصيد[9] في جوف الفراء.[10]

B 44a

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[1]B: – رحمه الله [2]A: الواجب [3]*Ishārāt*: + على ما تحقق [4]*Ishārāt*, 3, 278. [5]*Ishārāt*, 3, 295–296. [6]A: دعاوى [7]A: – قدس الله روحه العزيز [8]A: ولا [9]A: صيد [10]Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 210–238.

[خاتمة]

فهذا بعض ما دار في الخلد من الشكوك. ووراءه كلمات على مواضع أخر هي كالفروع المبتنية على أصول تكلمنا عليها، كإثبات العقول والنفوس المبتنية على كيفية صدور الأشياء من المبدأ الأول، وأنّ الواحد لا يصدر عنه إلا واحد، وأمثال ذلك. ومهما صحت تلك الأصول لزمت الفروع. فآثرتُ إهمالها لقلة الجدوى فيها. والله الهادي إلى الحق، والمرشد إلى الصواب.

ورحم الله امرءاً نظر فيه بعين الإنصاف، والتفت إلى نفس القول لا إلى القائل، وترك الميل والعصبية، فطالب الحق بمعزل عنه. والمرجو من فضله تعالى أن يفتح | علينا أبواب اليقين ويشرح صدورنا بأنوار[1] المعارف، A 150a
وأن يكشف الغمة ويزيح الشبه ويرينا الحق حقاً والباطل باطلاً بكرمه وسعة جوده، إنه هو الجواد الكريم. والحمد لله رب العالمين.[2]

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[1] A: بأنواع [2] B: + والصلاة على خير خلقه محمد وآله أجمعين وحسبنا الله ونعم المعين

كشاف الأسماء والجماعات